CHANGI INTERKUDS

CHANGI INTERLUDE

Leaves from the Diary of a Third Class Internee

by

GUY HERIOT

PREVIOUS CONVICTIONS :

Pure Drip.

S'Rupa Tadi.

Price **7/6**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

"Sussex" was published in *The Sussex County Magazine* and my thanks are due to the Editor of that paper for permission to reprint same. With regard to various other items, these have appeared at various times in *The Planter, The Scrounger, The Whistle, The Changi Guardian* and *The Convent Times*, and I trust I shall not find myself doing a further stretch for reprinting them here without sanction from the Editors of the above-mentioned periodicals. The photograph that faces page 65 was copied from the original (taken by a Chinese in Sime Road Camp, on September 12th, 1945), by Reeves, of Lewes.

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DEDICATION

To all internees who were in Changi and Sime Road Camps ; and especially those who lived and worked with me and helped the time pass more easily ; and to the Memory of those who laid down their lives that ours might be more bearable, this little book is sincerely dedicated.

PREFACE

WHY have I written this book ? I don't quite know. Was it at the request of " my sisters, my cousins, and my aunts " to put it in writing and appease their " 'satiable curtiosity " ? Well, partly so. On the other hand it may have been for the same reason that the lady had her portrait published over the caption, " She Felt Her Stomach Gas Go ! " This is my stomach gas and though I don't expect each and every ex-internee to agree with my views on certain subjects, or even my account of some incidents, they are my views and my recollections and, if they don't like it, they can do the other thing.

When originally projected it was merely to be a book of my lighter rhymes ; then it appeared that these would be more intelligible to the " lay " reader if published with some account of our time in Changi and Sime Road Camps. Then the vexed question arose as to what date such an account should start, and it occurred that the date of my return from leave in England in 1941, would be as good a point from which to start as any. Should this part bore you, I should skip the early pages. There was another reason. It seemed that such an account would also serve as a suitable medium in which to dish up my more serious efforts in the way of verse. With one exception, all the verse, doggerel or what you will, was written between March 1942, and September 1945—mostly in Changi. If any seem indecent or crude—well, we were living a pretty crude life. Besides, you should have seen some of the ones that got away !

I am indebted to Jack Faith for the original cover design ; but, owing to the various vicissitudes it underwent, it lost its pristine freshness. For the present reproduction I have to thank my daughter Fay. My thanks, too, are due to my wife for releasing me from " fatigues," both inside and outside, whilst this tome was in preparation : also to a cross-section of the above sisters, cousins, aunts, etc., who read the typescript and pointed out how to spell " vitamin." I am, however, still unregenerate, and maintain it can be spelt in more ways than one. In any case I plead poetic license. Finally, I thank all my prospective customers ; if at any time you regret the expense, don't throw it away. It will easily fetch ten cents. a page in your next internment !

KINGSTON,
LEWES.

April, 1946.

CONVOY

On through the Winter sea the grey ships roll
In one vast square : short cables' lengths divide
One from the next : around, destroyers glide—
Like sheep-dogs—while the roaring planes patrol.
The Mull's astern and Rathlin's on the beam,
But soon they fade into the swirling mist
And spray : onward, in zig-zag course we twist
And into the Atlantic slowly steam.

Day after day : through rain and biting wind
We throb : until, at last, the hour to break
The convoy comes : beyond our creaming wake
We see the friendly ships left far behind :
Homeward the escort turns, its duty done :
In solitude we steam to seek the sun.

CHANGI INTERLUDE

I LEFT ENGLAND on January 1st, 1941. I may say, here and now, that I can be numbered among those who " left their country for the country's good," as I had suggested to a friend who was in a position to advise me, that I should try (for a second time) for a commission in the R.A.F. However, the advice I received was to the effect that my place was in Malaya, which country was likely to be in the limelight before very much longer.

This is not going to be an account of my personal adventures during the Asiatic War, but merely an impression of the years 1941 to 1945—most of which period I spent in internment. Writing largely from memory, many of my impressions may be inaccurate ; but I hope to give some idea of the war as it affected Malaya, and the existence of those civilians who stayed behind. How accurate they will be may be judged from my first sentence. I said I left England on January 1st—a lie to start with. I sailed from Swansea !

Naturally, having sailed from an unusual port, we took an unusual course. Our first port of call was Milford Haven, where we picked up part of our convoy. Early the next morning, we fell in with the remainder of the convoy, some of which had come from Liverpool and some from the Clyde. There were some forty ships in all. For six days we chugged on, steering north-west. Then, at mid-day on the sixth day, at a point somewhere near Greenland I should imagine, we broke convoy and off we steamed for Cape Town on our own.

It was a pleasant voyage. It was only a small ship carrying fourteen passengers whose ages ranged from three months to seventy odd years. Including the three-monther there were three children on board ; for the rest, the sexes were divided four men to seven women. Of the total passengers, seven were bound for Malaya. If you are expecting a tale of narrow escapes from submarines or raiders I am afraid you are going to be disappointed. I am thankful to say there was nothing of the sort, and, after thirty-one days, we sailed into Cape Town.

We only stayed a matter of hours. Our next port of call should have been Adelaide ; but orders were given to the skipper to proceed to Fremantle. This suited the Malayan contingent as we were booked to sail from there to Singapore by the Blue Funnel ship. However, we were disappointed. We looked at Fremantle but

were not allowed to disembark, and off we went for another four days' run to Adelaide—Cape Town to Fremantle had taken sixteen days.

Arrived at Adelaide, we proceeded to Cooks to go into the matter of returning to Fremantle. We found there were no vacant berths on the train or plane for about ten days, which meant we should lose the next ship sailing from Fremantle for Singapore. The only thing to do was to return by sea—the way we had just come. So midnight found us once more on shipboard.

This time the ship belonged to the Melbourne Shipping Company and did the run Brisbane to Fremantle and back. She was very well equipped and catered largely for passengers doing the round trip for pleasure. As it was, the number of passengers was under fifty, and three hundred and eighty was her full complement. This did not deter the ship's company from treating us any differently. Games were organised during the day, and " Housey-Housey " in the evening, interspersed with dancing and talkie shows. In fact, a good time was had by all.

On arrival at Fremantle we found we had six days to put in until our ship sailed. These we spent, pleasantly enough, in Perth ; then once again embarked on our last lap. Singapore was reached on March 15th, after a trip taking nearly eleven weeks.

II.

TO a certain extent, Malaya had changed since I had left it in the preceding June. There were far more troops, British, Australian and Indian. Conscription for Europeans had been introduced ; those under forty-one having to serve in the Federated Malay States Volunteer Forces, and those others who were fit, in the Local Defence Corps or some other Auxiliary Service. The Volunteer training, naturally, had been increased and, apart from normal parades during the week, each man had to serve in camp for a continuous training period of two months each year. In my case, the Local Defence Corps drew the short straw and I became a full private, which did not entail anything much more arduous than a couple of parades a week and an occasional field day on Sunday ; and, of course, standing by for any internal trouble which might occur.

And there was trouble, oh yes ; I arrived back in Klang to find half the Indian labour forces from the estates on strike. In some cases there were genuine grievances—which were easily and soon adjusted—but in most cases it was a case of agitators stirring up trouble. And, undoubtedly there was Japanese propaganda behind it all. The majority of the coolies had no wish to strike—

I speak from experience: my own informed me they were only striking because they had been intimidated by neighbours. The trouble came to a head. There were one or two isolated riots: very regrettably, one or two deaths; a few minor injuries; and then the Police, aided by the L.D.C. were called out. Police raids were carried out on various estates and any agitator among the labour forces who could be identified by the Manager was taken off to Pudu Gaol in Kuala Lumpur, where he languished for some time until Government had set up a commission to enquire into his case. Incidentally, in my opinion Government might have stepped in much earlier and quashed the thing from the start, but they seemed to adopt rather a blind eye policy.

Apart from this, life went on much the same as it had done before the war. Twice a week there were L.D.C. parades and, in due course, I became a lance corporal; mainly I think because I and another man took some interest in carrying out the defences of the big railway bridge over the Klang River. The main piers had been chambered for mines, and a very rough guard house had been built—at the wrong end of the bridge, but this is a detail—and the powers that be ordained that this guard house must be sandbagged and barbed wire entanglement put all round it and the bridge. So Sam and I, with the aid of his conductor and a band of coolies from our respective estates, did the job.

I suppose very few of us really thought there was going to be trouble with the Japanese. We knew, of course, that there was a lot of talk going on between America and Japan regarding sanctions, and that ambassadors were rushing about hither and thither; but I don't think the idea of Japan actually attacking Malaya at this time—to say nothing of Pearl Harbour—occurred to us. The first intimation I got about it was on November 29th. It was a Saturday, and I was having lunch at the Spotted Dog in Kuala Lumpur, preparatory to going to the last day of the Selangor Races, when a chap came along and told me that orders had been issued to the L.D.C. to stand by as from midnight. So, taking a leaf out of Drake's book, I decided to see the meeting out before going back to Klang. The general opinion of other members of the Selangor L.D.C. that I met seemed to be that it was only a stunt of the Colonel's to ginger us up a bit. No members of the Volunteers had had any similar orders, nor did any member of the Forces with whom I spoke seem to have any ideas on the why or the wherefore of such an order. Eventually I got back home and was, I suppose, in bed by one o'clock.

I was up early, but almost as soon as I was out of bed, the 'phone went. It was the Sergeant in command of the Klang company of the L.D.C., ringing up to say we were to fall in at our Head-

quarters, the new Malay School in Sultan Street, at 8 a.m. He said he had rung up yesterday but had got no reply. This should not have happened as there was always supposed to be someone in the house during my absence : a very sound theory, but one which does not often work in practice.

I have forgotten to mention that by this time I was a corporal and second in command in Klang—I have to introduce such things, and though I don't want to make this account nothing but I, I, I all the time, it is somewhat difficult to avoid over-working that particular personal pronoun ; especially as a good deal of this narrative, in its original form, was almost entirely concerned with " what I did in the Great War."

Well, to continue. We duly paraded at the stated hour and shortly after the Klang platoons had fallen in, the Port Swettenham contingent arrived. There were only two Europeans in the Port Swettenham L.D.C. In Klang we had two platoons—one entirely European and the other Asiatic. Whether this was a good arrangement I am not prepared to argue. There were sound reasons for and against ; but at the time of which I am writing, I believe the main reason for this segregation of the races was that the Europeans, not unnaturally, knew more about soldiering. The total strength was about ninety.

About nine o'clock the District Adjutant arrived from Kuala Lumpur. It was no stunt of the Colonel's, but an official embodiment order from the G.O.C. Malaya. The Japanese attitude was apparently causing a headache to those in high places. Our orders were to go to our war stations until further notice. The Port Swettenham contingent took over the Connaught Bridge, and we the Klang Power Station. We were allowed to return to our bungalows when not actually required for duty, and, of course, our jobs had to be carried on. Still, I think I am correct when I say that the Selangor Local Defence Corps had the honour of being among the very first units to be mobilized. The Volunteers were not called out until December 4th.

The Klang contingent were lucky in their post, for the Power Station lay on the outskirts of the town, and was equipped with home comforts so to speak in the way of shower-baths, usual offices, etc. We could also get food sent in from the town : in the case of the Europeans, it came from the Railway Restaurant, and for the Asiatics from a nearby coffee shop. Let me say now that there was no racial distinction made as such, and we all mucked in together. Our actual quarters were the old Power Station from which the engines had been removed, and this gave us ample space for tables and beds. There was a small office where the N.C.O. on duty could write up his log book and reports,

The actual power came from K.L. to a transformer and relayed round the district and to Port Swettenham. The whole had been enclosed by barbed wire, and it was inside this wire that our sentries had to be posted, one at each corner. The protection of the place from sabotage was the reason for our being there.

In addition to the guard here, we were allotted a room in the Police Station, rather less than a mile away, and it was here that the Senior N.C.O. on duty had to remain, except for hourly visits to the Power Station. We had the use of a telephone and had to contact our Headquarters in K.L. every hour. Special men were detailed to do telephone duty only, and, in addition, there was a runner on duty. These men did two hours on and four hours off continuously; while at the Power Station, a guard of twelve men under an N.C.O. was to do a twelve hour spell of duty; the actual sentries being relieved every two hours. These were the preliminary arrangements.

However, the Klang crowd were the lucky ones as the Connaught Bridge had no facilities at all—no water, no light and all food had to be sent down the railway (provided the train would stop) or carried the best part of a mile down the track after being brought out in a car from Klang, three miles away. And the mosquitoes! I know from past experiences what they were like, having spent a night there during some abortive night operations the previous September.

As I said above, these were the preliminary arrangements, but during these first few days various adjustments had to be made. For one thing the Police agreed to take over the Connaught Bridge duty, which meant there would be more men available for the Power Station. Later, too, the Police decided to take on the day guard at the Power Station, but in actual fact they only did it twice. Another thing which affected the efficiency of the European personnel, was that some of the firms in K.L. were being sticky about their men being away from their jobs. This was not altogether unreasonable, as by now, the juniors were being called up for service with the F.M.S.V.F. In the end, to provide enough N.C.O.s for guard duty, nearly every European was given a stripe; there was general promotion all round (I became a Sergeant); Klang was to provide five guards a week and Port Swettenham two.

III.

THERE is no need to put on record what are well-known historical facts, but let me say that at 6 a.m. on Monday, December 8th, 1941, the Sergeant on duty rang me up to say that the Japanese had bombed Singapore in the early hours. He hadn't

rung up before as there was no reason to get me out of bed before my time !

The immediate effect of the Japanese invasion was the withdrawal of the Police from the day-time duties at the Power Station, and, of course, stringent black-out orders. The Port Swettenham contingent agreed to take on more guard duties, so on paper, it boiled down to our doing a twenty-four hour spell every ninety six hours. But it never worked in practice as there was so much to see to in the way of clerical work and arranging food and equipment. We also got a few more recruits ; the room at the Police Station was made into an independent Report Centre in charge of a special N.C.O. and five older men. This meant that when on duty, one could stay at the Power Station, which saved a lot of unnecessary running about in the dark, and also relieved us of the necessity of ringing up H.Q. all the time.

The Japanese soon started bombing Port Swettenham, and Klang had two or three cracks too. The first bombs to fall in Klang, fell on the L.D.C. Headquarters, but as we were over at the Power Station, it was not being used as such. Part of the building was the A.R.P. Headquarters, and the lady on duty got a violent shaking, and a man outside received a nasty wound on the thigh. On the whole, in Klang or Port Swettenham, there were few casualties. There was no provision made for the civilian population at all. When the siren went, people would go streaming out for the open country, and who can blame them ? In fact, the Government Offices were transferred temporarily to bungalows on the outskirts of the town.

As for us, we led a fairly humdrum life. There were occasional reports of " hooded figures " having been met on lonely roads, and, from what I have learned since, I believe Japanese were being dropped or landed in twos and threes between Banting and Port Dickson, some twenty miles to our south. There was one alarm when every available man had to be called up to stand to, as a native station master had reported paratroops dropping ; but these turned out to be shell bursts from one of the rare A.A. batteries in the neighbourhood of Kuala Lumpur.

At Christmas, owing to transfers of my immediate seniors, I received my commission, and took over command of Klang and Port Swettenham contingents. Christmas, however, passed almost uncelebrated ; then on New Year's Eve, orders were received for the whole unit to stand by at the Power Station, as there was a rumour that the Japanese were landing at Kuala Selangor, which is only about twenty-five miles north of Klang. However, it was a false alarm and the stand-to was washed out at about dawn.

However, the actual landing took place two days later, and then there was the trouble of getting those women who had not already left, to go. Not that it was much trouble ; but there should have been more definite instructions and better arrangements made for this. The question on how we would be best employed also cropped up and I had to attend a conference at Army Headquarters one night to discuss this. It was thought that we might be of more use doing road patrols, for by this time the Japanese were getting unpleasantly near, and were reported off Jeram ; and, as the coast here is a mass of creeks, there was no knowing where they might pop up next. Troops had been moved into the Kuala Selangor district.

Still, this idea of leaving the Power Station was not approved by K.L. and we didn't get out until the early hours of the morning of January 9th, when an R.E. major arrived to blow it up. I kept him out as long as possible as my orders were not to let anyone in for any reason whatever, whether he said he had orders to demolish the place or no. I rang up K.L. and eventually got the order to move confirmed. Japanese had been reported to have been seen only six miles away just before this, so really it seemed to be no time to stand upon the order of our going. At this time any Asiatic who was unwilling to move from Klang had been paid off, and of the remaining Europeans, half had been transferred to Kuala Lumpur for duty at Headquarters there. My detachment now consisted of sixteen Europeans and four Asiatics, with one motor bus, three lorries and sixteen cars. We shifted the lot to a shady road near the Police Station, and dossed down ourselves in the Police Barracks, leaving a couple of sentries on the vehicles. The Police had been disbanded, so we had the place to ourselves.

Our duties now consisted of anti-looting patrols around the town, and the carrying on of a " burnt earth " policy. As far as the estates went, we did our own dirty work ; but there were one or two rubber factories, including Bata's, which we received orders either to destroy or see that they were destroyed. January 9th was a Friday, and we spent the morning fuelling the lorries and cars, so as to be ready to move off at a moment's notice. We expected to go to K.L., but it was possible we might be told to proceed to a point further south—even Singapore. The fuelling of the convoy took some time, as the Japs were quite busy overhead, bombing and machine gunning, but we managed it ; spending most of the rest of the morning in and out of the deep concrete drain near the Police Station. A large fire was blazing away in the Railway Goods Yard, and there were fires all round where smoke-houses on rubber estates were going up. In the evening we took a run round to see how the destruction of the various

factories had been carried out by the owners. It hadn't. In the case of Bata's, it had been badly bombed in the morning, so we soon put the finishing touches to it. A half-hearted attempt had been made at two others, but we soon got them blazing again. It seems a shame now, and I can't say we relished doing it at the time. During the morning, two bombs had also fallen unpleasantly near the Power Station.

Orders were received to be ready to move in the morning south to Seremban *via* the coast road on receipt of confirmatory orders. So we turned in for a somewhat disturbed night. By this time we were self-supporting, carrying our own rations, and doing our own cooking.

Early in the morning a message was received that there was a train load of aviation spirit in a goods train in the Station yard which was being looted and would we deal with it and run off the petrol. It didn't seem a very good idea to run off the stuff with the fire still blazing ; but when we got there, we found there was very little left. In fact, a few jabs with a bayonet through the remaining tins did the job.

The confirmatory orders came through. We were to report at H.Q. K.L., but we were not to enter the town until mid-day. As it happened the original H.Q. had been evacuated during the night to the South of the river, as the bridges were being blown, and my orders were to contact guides on the outskirts of the town, taking the Damansara—Puchong Road to K.L. And so, on Saturday, January 10th, 1942, we left Klang, being the last European civilians to do so. This was at nine in the morning, and I believe the Japanese entered about an hour later.

It was a sad moment, but saddest of all was the parting with my dog, Bruce. I should have shot him, but I lacked the guts, and I honestly believed I should be back in about three months. I left him in good hands, my clerk promising to look after him. I have learnt, since my release, that he was shot when the clerk's bungalow was attacked by gang robbers some three months later. Good hunting, Bruce !

When dreary days alone I had to spend,
You came into my life : to please : to play :
Console in sorrow : can mere man display
Affection such as yours ? You were my friend.
That wagging tail, those eyes of trusting brown
That spoke the love you wanted to convey :
That frenzied welcome, when I'd been away
I can't forget : but Bruce, I let you down.

A sudden bullet would have made you free
To roam the happy hunting grounds : instead,
I left you, weary, waiting for my tread :
I was a coward : I ask of God one plea,
That I may see you, when I too am dead,
Come running round the bend to welcome me.

IV.

THE convoy reached Kuala Lumpur on time and proceeded to headquarters. Here everyone seemed in a flap, and I immediately received two lots of orders ; firstly to go down the town to collect some fellows who apparently had gone astray, and, secondly to detail half a dozen men to join a party which was off with some regulars who expected to contact the Japanese near Batu Tiga, half way on the road to Klang. I would have volunteered myself but my orders were to remain with my detachment—when I'd taken my tour round the town.

I drove down. The place was a shambles. Glass, broken shop goods, paper all over the streets where the shops had been looted. Only one bridge over the river was left. I took a quick run round, and by luck, managed to contact the missing people. Returning to H.Q. I found everyone remaining on the point of departure, and I was ordered to lead my Klang detachment as a unit to Bukit Nanas estate, Seremban, taking the Serdang and Bangi—Labu Roads, which is the back road way. We set off. It was not a speedy journey as one of the lorries was pretty slow, and, as in a sea convoy, the speed of all is governed by the slowest. However we got there eventually. Passing through Kajang, we just missed a raid, and we also saw our first hospital train. At Seremban, I received further orders to make my own way with the convoy (that is the Klang convoy) to Singapore, and on arrival, report to L.D.C. Headquarters there. The only definite order as regards time was, that we were to be clear of Seremban by daylight the next day. It was then about six in the evening. We decided to have a meal, so we raided our stores and, so far as I remember, had sheep's tongue and chocolate biscuits with tea and beer. But it went down well : we were hungry. We left Seremban about dusk, having decided to push on as far as Gemas that night, sixty-five miles away. We had permission to relax the black-out on our cars slightly ; otherwise I should never have attempted it. I led : it was a foul drive. Traffic of every description was on the road, from heavy lorries and guns to light cars and Bren gun carriers. Some had blazing lights and some had none. At two points there had been cases of cars going off the road, and these

were blazing away merrily. It took us three hours to reach Tampin, twenty-eight miles away, and here we parked for the night on an open bit of land near the hospital. We slept in the cars.

We were off again at crack o' dawn. As on the previous evening there was plenty of traffic going in each direction, especially after we crossed from Negri Sembilan into Johore at Gemas. Here the Australians were in position, and it was here, so the story went, that the great stand would be made. We halted for breakfast at the little village of Buloh Kasap, having accomplished some forty miles of our two hundred mile journey. I suppose it must have been about ten o'clock. Sam, who was with me, suggested going on to some friends of his, with whom his wife was staying, near Gunong Pulai, about twelve miles from Johore Bahru ; and asking them to feed us and put us up for the night. I agreed ; it seemed a good idea, and we didn't look like making Singapore before dusk, and we shouldn't have been allowed in after.

After two short halts for a snooze—most of us were feeling dead, having had very little sleep for seventy-two hours—we reached the turn off for Gunong Pulai at about six in the evening. Sam and his wife met us and escorted us to the bungalow. Here we were regally entertained by our host and hostess, Mr. and Mrs. Nicholson. They arranged baths in the factory for some, while others had one in the house. We had our own camp beds, so there was no trouble about that.

The next day—in case you have lost count, it was Monday, January 12th—we were just getting ready for the last lap to Singapore, when we heard planes. We looked up and saw three lots of Japanese planes, each of twenty-seven, heading for Singapore. This was the first big daylight raid on the town, and altogether there were over a hundred planes taking part.

Eventually we reached Singapore and reported to Headquarters. There we were informed that we were each to have forty-eight hours' leave and then were to report back, when, it was hoped, the authorities would be in a position to inform us what particular job we might take on. Personally if it meant the unit being disbanded, I intended to have a try for the R.A.F. In the meantime I went along to Adam Park to stay with some friends I had made on the ship coming out, and who had offered to put me up were I evacuated.

V.

I SPENT the next two days wandering around Singapore and bumping into all kinds of people I had not seen for donkeys' years. Some, like me, had arrived with other L.D.C. Units and were looking for something else to do. I could find out nothing—

except that we were not wanted—and that a meeting of all ranks was to be held in a day or so. In any case we were advised against going to the Man Power Bureau, as it was hoped that there would still be a job for us as a unit.

At last the meeting was held and we were addressed by our Colonel, Colonel Fletcher; our Second in Command, Major Adrian Clark; the Inspector General of Police, S.S., A. H. Dickinson; and L. H. Gorsuch, M.C.S. I've forgotten exactly what post Gorsuch held, but it was something to do with the Auxiliary Forces or Civil Defence of Singapore. We were then told that there would be a certain number of vacancies in the newly formed Air Observer Corps and the rest could be enrolled in a Police Unit, under Fletcher, to be known as the Special Security Unit. Their duties would be mainly guarding roads and strong posts and checking up on all traffic. There was no compulsion to join either. So I did my last job with the L.D.C. and took the names of anyone who wanted to join one or the other. Then I sloped off to see about joining the R.A.F. At the same time, the Colonel told me that, should I not get in and wanted to come back, he would be glad to have me. Several others left at the same time; some of whom were successful in getting commissions in units like the Ordnance Corps; and I believe I could have done likewise in the Intelligence, but at the time it was offered I was all for the R.A.F., as I had served with it in the last war.

It took some time and to cut a long story short, I duly applied, was interviewed, medically examined (very thoroughly), interviewed again and told to await orders. This took up to February 4th, when I got a letter, dated January 31st, telling me I had been granted a commission as Pilot Officer, R.A.F.V.R., and would I report as soon as I had collected my kit. I think they wanted me more as a Labour Corps officer than anything, as they didn't worry about any previous flying experience I had had, at any of my interviews. I never expected to fly, but I merely mention this as I don't think the delay in my getting the letter and therefore not reporting earlier for duty affected the war to any great extent. My job would have been supervising the construction of runways off the aerodromes, which, if not constructed months ago, at least should have been put in hand before February, 1942. I am not concerned here with the reasons Singapore fell, but here is one example of lack of preparedness. In fact there were practically no defences to the north of Singapore at all. It was only a fortress against a sea attack, and, lacking air support, not much of a fortress at that. Given air support, some sort of a show might have been put up: without it, it was impossible.

During this waiting period I was in Singapore a good deal. Most of the women were leaving : some men too, I regret to say, stowed away on the vessels on which their wives were travelling. Officially, no one under the age of fifty-five was permitted to leave without a pass. Raids were a daily occurrence, and bombs were dropped all over the docks ; the business quarter ; the residential areas ; and, where the death roll was of course highest, on the crowded Chinese part of the town. The sky was filled with black smoke all round the island, but whether this was from Japanese bombing or our own " burnt earth " policy, I am not prepared to say—largely, I think, the latter. The face of the big clock on the Victoria Theatre was smashed, though the clock still went, and the building bore a large notice across it reading : " They can't stop our Clock ! " As the army approached—they reached Johore Bahru on the 31st January, on which date the last of our troops crossed into Singapore and the Causeway connecting the island to the mainland was blown up—shells started to fall which was far more unpleasant than the bombing. In fact, though the visible damage was not so great, the town was assuming an untidy look with tangled wires from the trolley buses lying about the streets and smashed up cars here and there. A very different town from the one at which I had arrived some nine months earlier :—

A city where the evening breezes blow
Cool from the sea, to chase the torpid haze
Of mid-day from the streets : in sandy bays
The casurinas sigh : here tall palms grow :
Across the harbour, when the day is done,
The silhouettes of ships against the glow
Of setting sun stand dark : we did not know
That peace would die too, with the setting sun.

All round the island, black smoke like a pall
Hangs in the sky, and wreckage strews the street ;
Shells burst : high overhead, the throbbing beat
Of raiders : Death again begins to fall.
But this sad time will pass, and Singapore,
Healed of her scars and pain, will rise once more.

On February 8th we had to leave the house in Adam Park. My hostess had already sailed for New Zealand, but her husband stayed doing a sterling job of work in the Municipal Electrical Department. Right up to the Fall, there was never a serious disruption in any of these important social services, Gas, Light and Water, and the staff, both European and Asiatic, were out constantly doing repairs. It was with these men that I found

shelter for the next few days until I realised it was quite hopeless to get my R.A.F. uniform made, as all work in the town was now at a standstill. I made one last effort to join up with them, but I struck a most inconvenient time so far as they were concerned, for they were packing up ready to leave and informed me over the telephone that whoever it was (I forget now) I wanted, he was too busy to see me. Well that was that, and after one further try to contact someone up at Fort Canning who might help, I gave it up and reported to the S.S.U., which you may remember stands for Special Security Unit. This unit had been chivvied about all over the island and had led a most uncomfortable existence, often far too near the Japanese to be comfortable, but now they were billetted partly in the K.P.M. Building in Finlayson Green, near the docks, and partly in the Capitol Flats opposite the Cathedral. It was at this latter place that I joined them, and it was here that we learnt of the capitulation on February 15th. A few hours before, the last salvo of bombs fell all round this building but with very little damage being done.

When we heard that the capitulation was to be signed we received orders to proceed to the K.M.P. building and to join up with the remainder of the S.S.U. Accordingly we moved over—we still had cars—and found we were to be quartered up on the fourth floor. It was very uncomfortable. A bomb had dropped on the building earlier in the day and there had been a bit of a fire. Still, we lugged our kit up and just managed to doss down anywhere on the floor before dark. And, at eight p.m. peace once more reigned over Singapore. No lights were allowed, and it seemed rather eerie, this sudden hush after the noise that had been going on during the past week. " How long ? " was the question that was on everybody's lips.

An Island washed by tropic seas :
A modern city on the shore ;
A grey cathedral mid the trees :
Broad roads : fair gardens—Singapore.
And here, lighthearted, unaware,
We played ; though war hung in the air.

No longer laden tongkongs creep
Down turgid river to the ships,
Lying at anchor in the deep
And crowded harbour : no plane dips
Across the Airport, ere it flies
On peaceful journey through the skies.

Down near the Esplanade it seems—
Though it is only yesterday—
Years since we watched the rival teams :
But now a sterner game they play :
Now, on the grass, lie battered cars,
And bombs have left their searing scars.

From burning oil the sky is thick
With pungent smoke : along the quays
Is desolation, and flames lick
The lonely ships : beneath the seas
They sink. Around deserted homes
Still faithful, sad-eyed, some dog roams.

Shells burst : bombs fall : low fighters spray
Along the streets with hail of lead :
The ambulances gong their way,
The salvage squads seek out the dead :
Here, vivid tongues of fire thrust,
While all around is choking dust.

A battery upon the green
Hurls its defiance : and nearby
A dressing station, once the scene
Of laughter and of gaiety ;
A shattered clock face : broken trees ;
Tall buildings crammed with refugees.

The end is near : once more the roar
Of angry gun : once more the hum
Of raiders : but we know before
The night falls that the end is come.
The flag is down on Canning Hill.
And all is hush'd, unearthly, still.

There was no glory to relieve
Those last few days : we knew too late
Help could not come : not ours to grieve,
To slander or recriminate.
But, in the future, to reclaim
Our honour, and to purge our shame.

VI.

WE, that is the S.S.U. stayed ten days in the K.P.M. building. We had some vague notion that we might be given some sort of a police job. We were issued with passes to allow us to drive

our cars about—that is to say, a very limited number. My own car was wrecked during the night of the capitulation, probably by our troops trying to use it to make a getaway in, and wrecked because I had immobilised it. It, with thousands of others, was towed to the docks by the Japanese, and thence, presumably shipped to Japan for scrap. I was made one of the official drivers and so got about a bit. I drove some older men from their quarters in the Singapore Club to far less comfortable ones in the Police Station at Choo Jiat, near Sea View Hotel. Among those driven out was old Abang Braddon, who would be over eighty. The place was crowded. All the more fit Europeans, men and women, with the exception of people like ourselves who were in the Auxiliary Forces, had marched out here the day before, carrying what kit they could—a seven mile walk in the heat of the day. Another trip I did was with food out to the Mental Hospital in the direction of Seletar.

We were pretty uncomfortable in our quarters. Our total strength was about one hundred and sixty. Part of these were on the ground floor and the rest on the fourth. Owing to damage done to the water supply, the pressure was insufficient for the water to reach as high as this, and for washing we relied very much on stand pipes in the streets. The latrine accommodation was two sit-down W.C.s and one squat pan. Never before have so many used so few ! As a matter of fact we were lucky as, just across the green on the water front were three Clubs or Institutes which had a few baths and W.C.s, and we made use of these. As regards food we had plenty of stores and we spent a lot of time going round the town collecting cases and cases of stuff from various go-downs.

Then, after a few days of rumours, we had orders to parade on the Padang at 10.30, on February 24th. We gathered we were going to an internment camp and would be allowed to take one suit case and bedding per man, and that we would be allowed to run this out in our own transport, with our tinned supplies, before the parade. There would only be transport available for those who couldn't walk. Here I was lucky, as I was an official driver—though I did volunteer to exchange with an older man—as I managed to get quite a lot of my goods and chattels away. I also managed to get a mattress from a man who had both a camp bed and a mattress ; for the order was only one or the other.

We got to the Padang in good time but we were kept hanging about for well over an hour. The camp to which we were going was out beyond where I had driven a few days before. It consisted of several large houses, belonging to a wealthy Malay, enclosed behind a high wall ; and also a Convent School next door.

Eventually we fell in on the Padang and were addressed by a very nasty piece of work, a Major Kato. He spat and raved at us, but we didn't get the full benefit of his remarks, as he spoke through an interpreter, who I think gave a milder translation than the original. However, he told us—us being the S.S.U., Observer Corps, Medical Auxiliary Corps, the A.R.P., and several of the M.C.S. and Sir Shenton Thomas, the Governor—that we had broken all war conventions as, though we were not soldiers, we had helped our soldiers against the might of Nippon; that we had shipped the Japanese Nationals out of the country, which was contrary to International Law, and a lot of stuff like that. In spite of all this, Major Kato said he would treat us well; but that if we misbehaved he would punish us severely. After that the trek out began. I did several more runs with those who couldn't walk, and, when we all had arrived, there was the business of unloading and carrying the stuff in. The S.S.U. were quartered in the Convent, which already seemed to be full to overflowing. However, I found a space on the floor in a small room with thirteen others, but many just had to doss down along the verandahs. There was no electric lighting. Altogether there were about six hundred and fifty men in the Convent.

Food was the next problem and this was our first introduction to the queue system; since when I have queued, for meals alone, three times a day for nearly thirteen hundred days, to say nothing of Library, Latrine, and Doctor's queues. On this first evening all the 650 were fed from one kitchen, and as only one man could draw his rations at a time, you can imagine how long it took. After the food had been eaten there was another long queue to wash the plates, and yet another to fill water bottles. I began to think I wasn't going to care about internment much!

VII.

THE name of the place was "Karikal." This sounds rather Biblical and something after the style of Dornford Yates. It was a lovely situation; right on the sea with a sandy-grassy stretch between the buildings and a low sea wall, planted with coconut palms. For some obscure reason we were not allowed to sit on the wall and look out to sea, though we could sit under the trees and could bathe as much as we liked. This last concession was a godsend, as we had to depend on a rather smelly well for washing. Unfortunately it was only high-tide bathing; it was rather muddy at low tide, and we were restricted by our barbed wire entanglements, which had been hurriedly erected at a fabulous price just before the Japanese landed.

As I said, there was no electric light and the brown-out was still in force, which meant we had practically no light after dark. We were now on Tokyo Time, which is about an hour and a half earlier than Singapore Time, so in future all times given will be in Tokyo Time. For instance we got up at daylight, now about 7.45, and lights out was at 11 p.m.; dusk falling about 8.30. Breakfast was at 8.30 a.m.: Lunch at 1.30; and tea or supper at 6 p.m. With the tremendous queue, one had to wait in any case, and it was really a question of judging the best time to hook on. There were few, if any, tables or chairs, so one sat with one's plate on one's knees on the edge of the verandah downstairs. Food was pretty grim—at times just two biscuits and tinned butter for breakfast; rice and a little bully or small sardines for lunch, and rice with four or five pineapple cubes for supper. So-called tea or coffee was served with the first and last meals.

Altogether in the camp there were about two thousand men. The houses I mentioned in the other compound had been occupied since the first few days after capitulation, and the occupants were very glad of the supplies we had brought in—so glad in fact that the newly appointed committee decided that all supplies must go to the central store. Each camp was self-contained in that it fed and cooked for itself. A lot of the cooks were off the *Empress of Asia*, a transport which was sunk coming into Singapore a few days before the end.

It was not long before we began to get things really organised. A close study must have been made by the Committee of books about Prisoners of War Camps, for ours began to be run exactly on these lines. Lectures and classes were started, and of course there was a modicum of work to be done in the way of sanitary and other jobs. A small library was started and a "newspaper"—typed and pinned up on the notice boards, of course. As Dr. Faris was now P.H.O. I resuscitated my old limerick about him which was published in one issue:—

If ever you build a Latrine
In the course of your daily routine:
It is most satisfactory
To let Faris act for 'ee—
He'll see that the party's kept clean.

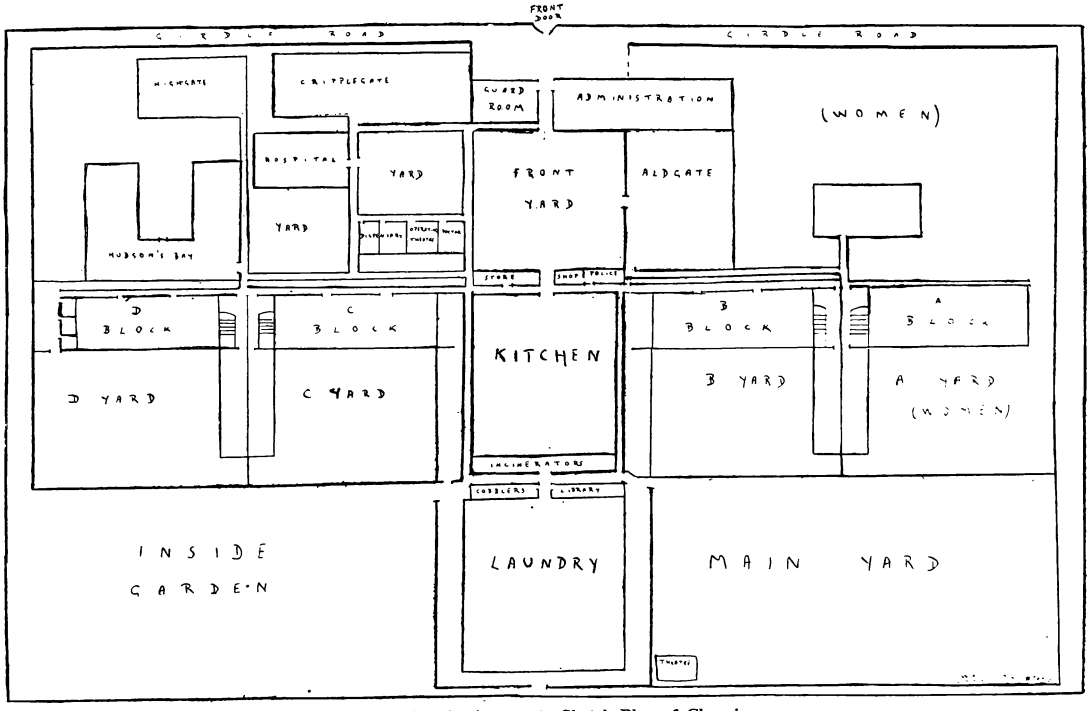
One great relief to me was that I was among friends. Apart from those actually in the S.S.U. there were plenty of others, including Fergus McIntyre. He was in the other part of the camp, but we used to bathe and sit together most evenings until dark; then one went to bed and smoked in the dark, eaten alive by mosquitoes which were terribly bad here.

The Japanese seemed to be treating us reasonably well on the whole. The food was inadequate, but with our stores to supplement it, it might have been worse. Or do I mean without our stores to supplement it? Work it out for yourself! We were supposed to stand to attention and bow when we met Japanese officers walking around, as they used to do about once a day. There had been a little trouble before we arrived and two or three Europeans had been beaten up for infringement of camp laws; and you were liable to get your face smacked for very little reason. Therefore, we were careful to behave ourselves. All badges of rank, etc., had to be removed from our uniforms: beards began to sprout; heads were shorn, and we began to look like hell generally.

We had just got more or less settled down when we were informed one evening that we were to leave the next morning at 10 o'clock for Changi Gaol, seven miles further out. We were to carry food for forty-eight hours and anything else we could. No delivery of anything else was guaranteed. Food for forty-eight hours in tins weighs about ten pounds, and this is a lot when it's part of all your worldly goods which you have to carry for miles. A bag which seems quite light becomes damned heavy after half a mile. I took a few spare clothes, my more valuable valuables and packed the rest of my stuff into my suit cases and dumped these with my mattress with the other people's stuff and hoped for the best. I may as well say here, that I was lucky and all my stuff arrived— and I had quite a lot, one way and another, as I had always had transport at my disposal from the time I left Klang until I reached Karikal. Others had little more than what they stood up in. We luckier ones, of course, gave away quite a lot— at least, most of us did: some people wouldn't part with a thing under any circumstances.

The next morning we were up making final preparations. The Governor headed the column, which was 2,500 strong. We were fairly near the end, and the pace was pretty slow as there were a lot of elderly men who should have been in lorries. With one or two halts on the way we finally came in sight of our new home, and as the S.S.U. swung round the bend someone started whistling "Home Sweet Home."

However, the women, who brought up the rear and who also had to march, went one better. They marched in singing "There'll always be an England." This is typical of the spirit of the women who stayed behind. During the whole of our internment they were always an example to us and proved over and over again that "they could take it!"



Extraordinarily inaccurate Sketch Plan of Changi.

And now the fight is done : with heads held high,
We who remain, must suffer our defeat
With dignity : and any hardship meet
With fortitude : it was but Destiny.
Though, in internment months we have to spend,
Remember but the better times, and try
To shun depression, as the days drag by :
For we know we shall triumph in the end.

If, in the past, we were intolerant
Of faults in others : to our own were blind :
Then may we face the future with a mind
More open, free from envy, pride or cant :
So, when at last, our freedom we regain,
These years will not be counted all in vain.

VIII.

THE prison was a large concrete building, enclosed by high double walls, about a mile round. The main building was divided into two blocks with the kitchen and laundry between them. These blocks were again divided into two inside. Besides these main buildings there were administration blocks and hospital and punishment cells. Entrance to the main blocks was through the administration block, which was surmounted by a clock tower, and across a quadrangle which brought you to a short passage. Straight ahead now was the kitchen, and the laundry was reached from passages leading round the kitchen on each side. Right and left of the kitchen were corridors running the length of each block. On the ground floors of each block were workshops, and where each block sub-divided, there was a passage leading to a small yard and a dining room ; and also a staircase leading to the other floors, of which there were three above the ground floor. This is a very rough description of the place, but I want you to try and visualise it, as I may refer to various parts of the prison later, and I want you to understand what I mean if I talk of D. Workshop or B Dining Room or C yard. On the upper floors were about forty cells, each twelve feet by eight, containing a central concrete slab about eighteen inches high, which was intended as a bed ; and, in one corner a squat latrine flush pan. The " beds " were usually referred to as the " sarcophagus," and the cells later were christened " Bed-Shitting Rooms " by some wit. Three men were allocated to each cell.

The blocks were known as A, B, C and D. The women were put into Block A, which contained the European prisoners' quarters

and had better exercising space and was easily segregated from the rest of the gaol. The S.S.U. were herded into the workshop of Block D, and for a while chaos reigned. I suppose it was about three o'clock, so we first of all had a spot of food from the supplies we had brought with us. As far as I remember we had been issued with a tin of bully or sausages or sardines, with a tin of cheese, and a tin of fruit ; in addition to which each man probably had a few odd tins of his own. I know I had—including a pot of Paté de Fois Gras ! After we had fed, we had to get sorted out. We made a line down each wall and two down the centre. The workshop was about a hundred and fifteen feet long by forty wide and twelve feet high. The corridor to which I referred as coming from the kitchen, extended down one side and had two iron-barred doors leading from it into the workshop. For the rest of the way it was divided from us by a wall about three feet six of concrete, topped by bars and expanded metal—just like a monkey house ! At the end furthest away from the kitchen were three stores opening into a small yard, which again opened into D yard, which was on the other side of the workshop. These stores were occupied (*a*) by the Roman Catholic Priests and Lay Brothers, (*b*) The Salvation Army Officers and (*c*) by an assorted lot, including Archdeacon Graham White and one or two M.C.S. fellows. This yard was usually referred to as the Deanery.

I was allotted a central position where I dumped my kit bag—of course the lorry stuff had not yet arrived. The next thing was to get some drinking water. Apparently there was something wrong with the pumps, as we were told the only water we would get would be from two army tank lorries which would bring it in at stated hours. A lot of us tooled off to the front yard where these lorries were and joined the queue. When we got back, we found instructions had been given that we could use one of the punishment cells for bathing, but one amongst all of us wouldn't be much good. Still we hoped for the best. I suppose we had another scratch meal and then turned in on the floor. Altogether one of the most miserable days I have ever spent.

IX.

NOW, having got you all to Changi, the question is : " Where do we go from here ? " You see, when I first wrote the notes from which this version is compiled I didn't know. Now I know all the answers. Our internment was divided into three periods : the first from March 6th, 1942 to October 10th, 1943 ; the second from October 10th to the day we left Changi for Sime Road, on May 1st, 1944 ; the third from that date until we heard the war

was over on August 19th, 1945. Our own organisation remained the same throughout : basically so did the food, though naturally it got worse and there was less of it. The main differences in the periods were the new restrictions which were enforced from time to time, and the increase in the amount of work required, and the effect of the devaluation of the Straits Dollar on our existence.

First of all I should like to give you an idea of what internment means in sort of general terms. As Winston Churchill wrote in his book, " My Early Years," it means living at the mercy of one's conquerors. What they said ; what they did to us, we had to endure ; there was no appeal. It meant living for three and a half years on insufficient and unaccustomed food. Never once during the whole period did the Japanese rations come up to the standard laid down by themselves.

Then, I think, almost the worst part was that there was no privacy whatsoever. I suppose the occasions on which the average internee was ever absolutely alone could be counted on one hand ; and those occasions would probably be when, by some chance, one of the few W.C.s with a door on it happened to be vacant when he wanted to use it. Changi Prison was built to house six hundred criminals, and we were two thousand eight hundred strong, men, women and children, which later on was increased to three thousand five hundred. The space allotted to one man was seven feet by three and a quarter feet, or twenty-three square feet—not twenty-three feet square, which is a very different thing.

When we first went into the place, we had nothing except what we brought with us and what came on the lorries after us. We were allowed to send into the town and get anything we could find in the way of equipment, but we had to start absolutely from scratch. There was hardly a table, and not one of us had a chair or stool, and very few beds. Among the things we brought in were buckets, brooms, lead piping, leather for shoe repairs, cooking utensils, medical supplies, kitchen knives, surgical instruments, firewood, timber for repair wood or building. The only equipment which was in the gaol was some of the wooden " tongs " in which the rice and soups were served to each floor. Firewood was required, for although the boilers in the kitchen were fitted up for oil burning, there was only enough oil for a fortnight, and we were told there would be no more. The reason given—the same as the excuse to make us walk out—was that we had destroyed all the oil and petrol on the island. The first job, therefore, which had to be done was the conversion of the oil burners to wood burners ; and this was undertaken by our own engineers. In matters like this we were extremely lucky—almost Swiss Family Robinson-ly so—for every profession and trade was represented among us from

first class surgeons, doctors and dentists to bakers, butchers, cobblers and plumbers.

Another very unpleasant feature of our lives was the presence of bugs. During the whole period I do not suppose that anyone was entirely free from bugs in his bedding and kit. Whether they were in the prison when we arrived, or whether we picked them up at Karikal, I can't say, but they were there. Unsuspectingly we let them breed before we realised what we were in for, and before long they had multiplied exceedingly. I suppose they bit us, as we used to find them full of blood, but they didn't itch or appear to raise lumps, and they didn't live on one's person—merely paid calls at night from their snug retreats perhaps in the lining of a suit case, a crack in the woodwork of a bed or the seam of a mattress. You might feel one crawl across your face in the dark, and you could tell if it had been a bug by the stink after you had squashed it. We found the only remedy, which needed the co-operation of all, was to take one's bedding out at least once each week and examine it thoroughly, and, if it were available, paint beds, etc., with a solution of *Izal*. In some parts of the prison a " Bug Roster " was kept and the date on which each man's bed was examined, recorded, together with the week's " bag. "

And do you realize that once a fortnight for several months, each man had to strip and be examined for body vermin by our doctors ? The reason for this was we harboured several what Gilbert once called " imperfect ablutioners " in our midst. As someone said : " We have no private parts now ! "

You may have noticed I said " our doctors " in the preceding paragraph. There was a Japanese M.O., but he was a sort of figure-head and did nothing. Our doctors attended to the sick ; did all operations (and there were quite a number) ; and did all the Health and Sanitary work. Even the Japanese guards were treated by our doctors—mainly for V.D. as far as I can make out. As a matter of fact, everything in the camp was done by us—administration, subject in this case to certain Japanese orders, construction, electrical work, servicing of lorries and plumbing. And, what is more, some of the Japanese had their hair cut by our amateur barbers.

As regards food. For the first period, looking back, it might almost be called reasonable. As far as bulk went it didn't seem too bad ; but the feeling of repleteness after a meal didn't last, and, so far as the calory and whatnot content it was insufficient. Rice was, of course, the main item. This was supplemented by a modicum of salt, sugar, oil, salt fish, and, at times, fresh meat. When I say " fresh " I mean it hadn't actually turned but it was often pretty near the corner. On very rare occasions we got fresh

fish, and there were periods when we got eggs once or twice a week. A certain amount of green vegetable was sent in ; but a great deal of this was of the pumpkin and gourd type, which are largely water and boil away to nothing. These were the rations laid down by the Japanese, but, as I have already said and, as I want to emphasise it, I will say again, we never got the standard Japanese ration. We were, however, allowed to supplement it ourselves, and could buy food through the " Neutral Agent." This was a Mr. Sweitzer of Messrs. Diethelm & Co. He could also buy on credit for us through Tokyo and the Red Cross, but I am not quite clear on the working of this side. " Scrounging Facilities " were also granted us, and we were allowed to send out parties to various go-downs and collect supplies ; though this could not have lasted long. Items we obtained by these means included, Bully, the large herring type of sardine, Mapro Chicken Curry, and, at different times, eggs, coconuts, tinned pineapples, soya beans, red beans, maize, salt fish and rice polishings. These latter, being made from the husk of the rice, have a very high food value ; but, as a matter of fact, before the war, we used to feed it to cattle and poultry as " Bran." Sometimes we could buy such things as eggs, coconuts, onions, potatoes, sweet potatoes, sardines, etc., for our individual consumption, and during the early period, private cooking was allowed, and each block had a stove or two fitted up in one corner of the yard. And very excellent too were some of the curries produced by these amateur cooks !

We had three meals a day—breakfast, dinner, tea. Breakfast consisted of a pint or so of Kungi, which, strictly speaking, is the water in which rice has been boiled, but in our case was rice boiled up in water to the consistency of porridge. Tea was served with this meal. At first it was sweetened and had milk in it, but most of the time it was made with no milk or sugar and very little tea and bad tea at that. For dinner we got a pint or so of dry rice and a pint or so of stew or soup. Sometimes this stew had bully in it ; sometimes sardine—when I say " sardine " I usually mean the large herring kind—or chicken curry. Sometimes it was just vegetable soup, but, in that case, bully or sardine might be served " on the hoof " and a tin issued to so many men ; one tin to three in the palmy days, but one to eight latterly until the stocks gave out at about the end of 1943. If there was fresh meat it was usually put through a mincer and served at the rate of about three ounces a man. Rumour, who is not always a lying jade, had it that on these fresh meat days, " the kitchen " fed on steaks.

After the first four months we started eating our own home-grown vegetables—" Bayam," " Ceylon Spinach," " Sweet Potato Tops " and " Kangkong." When I die I think these words will

be engraved on my heart! It sounds quite a nice variety, but it all boils down to (or rather *they* did) to spinach, spinach, spinach, spinach, spinach—and not very good S. at that. Fifty per cent. or more consisted of Sweet Potato Tops, which before the war were not regarded as fit for human consumption at all, and only fit for pigs. Early production was at the rate of four ounces a man a day, but this was stepped up to ten. This entailed a lot of hard work on the part of the gardeners, who started entirely from scratch.

Tea, supper or what you will, consisted of more Kungi. In the early days a few pineapple cubes or dried apricots or prunes might be served with this, and I have often seen people cracking open the prune stones to eat the kernel. Some form of bread was served with this meal. These loaves, usually referred to as the "bun," were about three ounces in weight and were made from various ingredients, according to what we had in stock. At first it was flour; then rice flour and/or soya bean or coconut scrapings or maize. More tea was served with this: one pint per man.

Food was very strictly rationed, and rightly so, and it was issued from the kitchens as far as possible according to the floor strength of each part of the camp. There would, of course, be some over, and it was quite an art on the part of the servers to dish it out evenly. In time each floor accumulated a set of measures varying in content and graded in eighths of ounces from half a pint to a pint and a half; and intricate calculations would go on the arrival of the tong of Kungi or soup from the kitchen. The quantity of this had to be divided by the floor strength; both of which might vary from meal to meal. In serving rice, there was the question to consider whether it might be served loosely packed or rammed tight; and, with Kungi, whether it should be scraped on top or not. And then, after everyone had been served, there was the second helping roster, as everyone must be given a chance in turn of getting a second helping if the supply ran to it. These rosters would be kept for every item served—and in some cases, even "tong-scraping rosters" were kept!

From food let us go to sanitation. The water scarcity did not last for the pumps were soon put in order. Each block had in its yard some showers on the verandahs which ran along the main building, but the main place for bathing was the laundry. This was a large room, the centre of which was occupied by heavy tables, and down two of the sides and at one end were large concrete tanks. Dipper baths, of course, were the only ones allowed. For the washing of plates and dishes, there was at least one tap for each floor. With three men living in a cell, it was considered unhealthy for the flush pans in these to be used, so other means had to be found. There were a few other W.C.s here and there;

for instance there was one pedestal in the laundry and an unscreened squat in each of two corners; and there were two W.C.s in each yard. This works out at about nine latrines—excluding the women's side (which was slightly better equipped in this respect) and the hospital—among two thousand. At first, trench latrines were dug in the yards, but these filled up very quickly and, to say the least of it, are unpleasant and unsightly—we had no material for screens. Bore-hole latrines were introduced at certain places: pit type in others; and gradually these were screened off as material was scrounged from here and there; but the principal latrine was at one end of the Main Yard. This yard lay south and east of the prison, with the laundry at one end and blocks A and B along the north side. It was about one hundred and fifty yards by seventy—I speak from memory. There was a deep concrete drain taking off the water from the laundry running along the southern side, and at the far end of this about thirty seats and squats were erected over it. It was flushed frequently from the laundry overflow. Exactly what happened after the water and its contents left the prison I am not quite certain; though I think so violent was the rush that the more solid bodies were broken up as they went under the wall, but I have seen, when I have been working in the garden outside, Chinese children in the drain collecting undigested grains of rice as the tidal wave fled on down the concrete drain which extended some way outside before losing itself in the neighbouring Kampong. I take it such rice as they gleaned was fed to their chickens, but it was a rather nauseating spectacle to witness. Incidentally this latrine was known as "The Wailing Wall." Later, when the Main Yard was closed, the latrine had to be erected in the laundry yard, where it was even more unpleasant; hardly any elbow room and one performed into the water before it was released by a gentleman specially appointed to the task. Still it had its compensations; he drew an extra bun by way of remuneration, which remuneration was generally reserved for those doing heavy work. At the end of the Main Yard a number of bore-holes were also sunk as reserve accommodation if and when there was trouble with the water. Sometimes this area was referred to as "Crouch End" and sometimes as "Lower Tooting," but I don't think either name really caught on. I forgot to mention that at all times we had to be careful with water, and most of the time we were restricted to one bath daily.

As regards urinal accommodation. None of this valuable material was allowed to run to waste. It was wanted for the garden, and various "pissoires" were erected here and there, and the outlets piped to various parts of the garden if near enough;

otherwise receptacles were placed here and there which could be removed to the garden with ease. It was our main fertiliser, and though a rice diet appears to increase the supply, there was never enough. And to think of things we've said about John Chinaman and his methods of manuring!

X.

NOW a word as regards Camp Organisation. At the head of the Men's Camp and the Women's was *Men's* or *Women's* as the case might be, Representative. The original Men's Representative was appointed by the Japanese. He was a Colonel Macrae, I.M.S., but after a few months, he, Sir Shenton Thomas, Sir Percy McIlwaine, and one or two other high-ups, were sent to Formosa, together with the majority of the high ranking officers from the Prisoners of War Camp. Thereafter we elected our own Representative, subject to the approval of the Japanese. He held office for a term of three months and could stand again for election. Personally I think it was a thankless job. Then there was a Camp Medical Officer, a Camp Health Officer, a Camp Quarter-Master, a Camp Fatigue Officer, the Chairman of the Messing Committee and the Chairman of the Messing Reference Committee. This last post was concerned with our diets; vitamin contents and the like. Again each block had its Representative: M.O., H.O., Q.M. and Fatigue Officer; and these were again duplicated on each floor, and, even the floors in some cases, were divided again into sections with their own officials. All these posts, with the exception of the medical ones, were only tenable for three months, and we seemed to be living in a continual state of electioneering. But I must say the organisation was first-class and things ran very smoothly on the whole.

We were a pretty well-disciplined crowd. Some thought we were too meek and servile to the Japanese, but there was nothing to gain by being otherwise. The Japanese would, I am sure, have welcomed an "incident" to give them an opportunity of bumping some of us off. The usual excuse was that "we must consider the women," and, after all, there was a lot to be said for this point of view; for, unless we could do any good by giving trouble, there was no point in jeopardising their position, which wasn't too good as it was. As I have said before, the women could take it and would no doubt have backed us up. I refer to the decent women; for the Women's Camp was comprised of a very mixed lot, down to prostitutes who were not above obliging the Japanese sentries, and that in front of the other inhabitants of their rooms. It was this assorted mixture in the Women's Camp that made life there so impossible.

A Camp Police Force was instituted immediately, and there was a Disciplinary Tribunal which presided over both Criminal and Civil Courts ; and a list of by-laws and regulations, with appropriate penalties as long your arm, was compiled.

As for Fatigues, it was stressed that these were voluntary, but every fit man was expected to do his whack. There was no labour shortage during the first year, and all the average man did was two hours' work on two days a week. These jobs might range from the popular " Outside Firewood " fatigue, to " Cleaning the Wailing Wall "—not so popular ! Other casual fatigues consisted of passage sweeping, washing the hospital blankets, stacking firewood, a certain amount of gardening and a number of others of varying degrees of strenuousness. There were gangs of permanent workers for essential and, to a certain extent, specialised jobs, such as the Kitchen Workers, the Inside Gardeners, the Wood-Cutters and the Hospital Orderlies. These entailed pretty hard work and carried perquisites in the form of extra rations, officially and unofficially. Still, on the whole, these men deserved something extra. Until the beginning of 1944, no remuneration was received from the Japanese for any work done, and then work was paid for at the munificent rate of fifteen cents a day, which a month or two later was increased to forty cents ! And the strange part is that at that time something could be bought for fifteen cents.

A word about finance seems indicated here. Few of us brought into camp any vast sums, but a fund was started and everyone invited to subscribe to a Camp Loan. Quite a sum was collected and this was spent on buying up any food, medical supplies or materials we could from outside. Quite a lot of liberty was allowed in this way for lorries going out, and we were using our own drivers. Contacts were made in the town with wealthy Chinese and others ; some of whom supplied us with cash and some with goods against cheques signed by local bankers and heads of firms. Apart from food, other things like toilet necessities were brought in and retailed to us at a small profit. When the loan had reached a certain amount, a system of giving each man a sum of five dollars a month was introduced ; which later was superseded by another, whereby he got a monthly credit of four dollars, and this went on until the fund was exhausted. It was possible to sell valuables through the drivers or anyone else who had contact with the world outside, and quite a sum was raised this way, which was all for the benefit of the community, as any cash raised this way eventually found its way into the coffers of the Central Fund. I am not quite *au fait* with the working of the Finance Committee, but roughly this is what went on, and is one of the things which led to the trouble on

October 10th, 1943, which date saw the inauguration of the second period of our internment ; but I haven't quite got there yet.

We continually asked the Japanese to lend us money through the Red Cross, but they wouldn't play. I don't think they recognised the Red Cross Convention ; in any case not once was a Red Cross Representative allowed near us. After a time, and I suppose when they were getting tired of our demands, they suddenly introduced about four hundred Jews in our midst, and I honestly believe it was partly as an answer to our applications for funds ; for these men, who hailed from the Middle East and who were largely the type of trader one finds in Change Alley, or hawking things down at the docks to tourists, brought in a large sum of money of which they immediately handed over a hundred thousand dollars. Here was another market for anything we had to sell. They were British subjects and as such I mustn't say much about them ; but we should have been far happier, taking things by and large, if they had never been brought into our camp. But then, our happiness was not the aim of our captors, and the more they could humiliate us, the better they were pleased ; and one imagines that it was to this end that the Japanese Military Guard was changed to a Sikh one, and a pretty low type of Sikh at that on the whole. It saw the introduction of a new fatigue. Sweeping out their guard room and cleaning their latrines ! We also had to pay compliments to them as well, which got our goat even more than bowing to the Japanese ; but what would you ? If one didn't one might be lucky to get off with a mere face slapping. Incidentally, the Jewish women would not clean their latrines : the European women did it for them.

There was an " Exchange and Mart " business which did quite a lot of trade, as most people had something to sell or exchange. All manner of things were advertised, either " for sale " or " wanted "—it might be such mundane things as shaving soap or razor blades ; or someone might want to buy a present for a friend in the Women's Camp. One " line " in which I know business was done, was " Dysentery Specimens." I am not romancing. Even I, with my fertile imagination, couldn't have invented that one. Such things might be required by an ardent " lead-swinger " to get off fatigues on a Medical Certificate. These articles were not of course obtained through the Exchange and Mart, but in our flourishing Black Market.

We had a succession of Japanese Commandants ; some decent ; some swine, and some more or less nonentities. If a man seemed to favour us at all he was soon moved. The Civil and Military Administrations seemed to be in water-tight compartments, and it was the Military that overruled everything. But it was very

confusing at times, because for the most of our internment there was a Commandant, Lieutenant Sazuki, who seemed little more than a figure head ; there was General Saito, whom I do not think was too anti-British ; and there was " Mr." Tominaga, who was a swine. Though he had no military rank that we knew of, he would frequently be in uniform, complete with sword, and what he said seemed to go. We all thought he must be a member of the notorious " Black Dragon " Society. I've forgotten what his position was—Camp Controller or something, but it equivocated " Lord High Everything Else "!

The only thing I can say in his favour—and it really boils down to nothing—is, that like the headmaster, he was a beast, but a just beast. That is to say, " just " from his point of view only ; he usually had some reason for punishing people ; though the punishment far and away exceeded the crime. Kicking a man in the face and privates after he has been knocked down is hardly a just punishment ; and this happened with fatal results in one case. There was the famous occasion too when he caught some of the orchestra practising too near the women's camp. He asked them if they wanted to watch women or play tunes, and, as a punishment, kept them on the top of the tower over the main entrance, completely unprotected from the weather and without food or drink for forty-eight hours, so they could see the women better. As far as I know this man has been arrested and is awaiting his trial in Singapore.

There were a number of interpreters, mainly recruited from men who had lived in Malaya and could speak Malay, which was the language largely used when conversing with the Japanese. Most of these men too enjoyed taking it out of us, and of them, Karzuey or Puss in Boots, as he was popularly called, was one of the worst. He had, as a matter of fact, been caught by us in Singapore and sent to India ; from where he had been exchanged—how or why I don't know. His foible was to get drunk and to come round the camp at night looking for trouble. On one celebrated occasion he beat up about seventy men for no more reason than that they had turned in for the night and didn't get up and bow when he approached. He too, I understand, has been arrested. All the Japanese seem to love wearing swords and as the genuine article was not apparently obtainable, our carpenters had to make wooden ones for some of these fellows.

XI.

AMUSEMENTS must, I think, be my next heading, and that will bring me up to the end of the first period of our internment. First and foremost was the Library, which was an absolute godsend.

As far as I know, most of the books came from Raffles Library, though a certain number came from private houses, and, of course, a few we brought in individually. There must have been some ten thousand books in all at one time ; and I suppose every one of them had been repaired and rebound, often more than once, at one time or another. We owe quite a lot to the librarians and repairers ; especially to the latter, whose work was done in their spare time. There were, naturally enough, a lot of trashy books, but there were any number of the better class novel and quite a good selection of classics, poetry and books of reference.

Then classes were started in every conceivable subject from Higher Mathematics to Magic (almost the same thing !) and from Welsh to Poultry Keeping ; to say nothing of such mundane subjects as Book-Keeping, Shorthand, Chinese, Literature, Drawing and Bridge. There were lectures on every subject imaginable : there was a Planters' Circle, A Fly-Fishers' Circle, a Yachting Circle and others. There were debates : there was an institution called Mock Parliament, where would-be politicians might air their views ; there was Question Hour, when experts expatiated at length on previously propounded questions. Then there was a school for the children ; I am not sure whether this should be included under Amusements, but there seems some similarity ; except the children had to go and we could keep away. Not always with great success ; for, with limited space, one might be trying hard to concentrate on making six No Trumps, while someone was lecturing on some subject of absorbing interest such as " The Making of Tin Plate," just behind one's back.

I mentioned Bridge in the above paragraph. There was plenty of this played, and a Bridge League with teams of five pairs was instituted. Each floor entered at least one team, and, at its height, there must have been ninety-six teams competing in one or other of the four divisions. Ninety-six teams would absorb almost half the camp. One match was played each week. Chess was the only other competitive game of this nature played. There were quite a number of Poker Schools too, and Cribbage was another popular indoor sport.

For outdoor games Cricket was the most popular, though there was a good deal of football played on a small ground which we, or rather those interested, levelled off in the Main Yard. Cricket was of the type that used to be called " Yard Cricket " at school, and was played in the smaller block yards, where runs were scored by the ball striking the walls. Each side was allowed an hour in which to bat and anyone who reached fifty had to retire. These were the arrangements for league cricket, but with the important fixtures like F.M.S. *v.* Colony, or Straits Police *v.* F.M.S. Police,

there was no time limit. Such matches were played on the appropriate dates. The " Non-Benders," that cricket club whose members are men over 45 ; somewhat " stouter than they used to be," of course fielded a side. A league was run in connection with the football too. There was tennis of a sort played, and a little badminton and boxing.

There were innumerable concerts ranging from performances of " The Messiah " by the Male Voice Choir, to vaudeville of a high standard so far as performance, but not quite so high as regards purity. There were orchestras which catered for real music lovers or those who just wanted everything " swung." The Magic Circle got together and put up some very fine shows ; and quite a number of well-known plays were produced, at first at the Victory Theatre, which had been erected in the Main Yard, and afterwards in a corner of the laundry. Unfortunately the theatre had to be demolished, as some Japanese, not altogether unreasonably, objected to a large V being displayed over the proscenium. This reminds me that for a long time we used to end up all shows by singing " God Save the King "; but this too was stopped, and we had to content ourselves by standing in silence for a moment or two. Among other plays produced were : " The Wind and the Rain," " The Importance of Being Earnest," " Arms and the Man," " Outward Bound " and " French Without Tears."

Two newspapers appeared (on the notice boards) every few days. One, *The Changi Guardian*, was the more official organ ; the other *The Convent Times*, sticking to its original title as published in the Karikal days, was more of a local D Block affair. Another publication worthy of note was *The Scrounger*, an illustrated paper in a lighter vein, which was produced by A. C. Maxwell and John Harrison of the Police, and Frank Tuck, a planter. It appeared some six times in all, and went into voluntary liquidation, so to speak, in case it could not keep up to the high standard it had set itself.

These were our main amusements. Cooking was another thing that occupied quite a lot of some people's spare time, and gardening enthusiasts cultivated small plots of flowers in odd corners here and there, which certainly helped to relieve some of the drabness of our surroundings. The Archdeacon was one of these, and his garden at one end of D yard called forth the admiration of all.

> Grey is the prison : high the double wall :
> The weary tread of many up and down
> Has killed the grass, and left a dusty brown
> Around the yards to spread gloom over all.

Dull is our lot, and so, from day to day,
We just exist : but though the grim bars frown,
We have the sunlight still : the moon to crown
The starlit nights—they can't take these away.

But there's a garden in this dismal place :
Tended by loving hands, gay flowers are seen—
Red roses peep amid the trailing green :
Mauve orchids : bourgainvilleas enlace
Their crimson arms : and honolulu sprays
Its pink above the cannas' orange blaze.

XII.

I HOPE I have given you some idea of our life in Changi up to October 10th, 1943—the " Double Tenth " as it became to be known, and by which name I shall always refer to it.

During the whole of this period, I do not think there was ever a real check up on us, except perhaps when we all had to sign some form of parole to say we would be good boys and not try to escape or do anything we shouldn't. Not that we should have held to our word, as no such parole given under coercion can be regarded as binding.

Some time in September, 1943, the Japanese announced that a roll call of the whole camp would be held in the Main Yard on the following Saturday at 10 a.m. There was a lot of conjecture as to the why and wherefore of this order ; the incorrigible optimists at once assumed it meant Repatriation. Still most of us hid anything we didn't want found, such as diaries and valuables—incidentally, so far we had never been searched—in case there was going to be a search. The roll call took place and by about 11 a.m. we were all back at our usual occupations.

A week or two later, another roll call was announced, under the same conditions, and again we duly paraded. I may as well mention that for a 10 o'clock roll call, our people thought it expedient to have a preliminary roll call, Block by Block, in each yard at 8 a.m., before moving off to the Main Yard, where we would fall in, Block by Block, in alphabetical order. I do not say it was entirely unnecessary, as it meant quite a lot of organisation to get us all paraded in the correct order in the Main Yard, but it meant a longish parade in all. Later on, when weekly roll calls became part of the Camp routine, we were able to cut it down and only parade an hour before the Japanese wanted us. But to continue : we paraded, completely lulled into a sense of false security and with no prior preparations in the way of con-

cealing anything, and fondly expecting it would all be over in an hour or so. However, it was not to be. At 10 o'clock, all the entrances to the Main Yard were closed and armed guards posted ; and a crowd of nasty looking Japanese civilians entered, in addition to the usual camp officials. After the roll call, we were ordered to stand fast and about forty men were called out and taken to the main office, and thence to Singapore. Meanwhile a search party went round each block while we waited on parade ; then we were ordered back to our quarters. When we got back into the building we found armed guards everywhere ; in some places a violent search was being carried out—people's bags being opened and the contents thrown in a heap on the floor—in other places a more orderly search was carried out in the presence of the owner of the articles searched. I was wrong when I said we were back in our quarters ; unless ours was the stuff being searched, we were kept out in the yards, and it was 9 p.m. before we were allowed in. Breakfast had been served at 7 a.m., so we were pretty peckish ; but the kitchen responded nobly and dished up something.

So a very thorough search was carried out of everyone's kit and every corner of the prison. For some weeks before, there had been Japanese wandering about with tapes ; and we had been ordered to furnish plans of the place showing every nook and cranny and where everyone slept. We thought it meant more internees were going to be brought in. In spite of this search they didn't find what they were after, namely, our wireless set. They knew perfectly well we had one and I expect had found out either by means of detectors, but more than probably by means of spies in our midst. How many sets we actually had I can't say : I know there were several.

I have not mentioned this part of our activities before as I thought this would be a more convenient place to relate what I know about it : though at the time I did not know much about the actual reception. When we were first interned we got news of a sort by more grape-vine methods—things thrown over the wall and such like ; and one of our main sources was through the ambulance driver. This man, John Long, an internee, had to take the patients who were more seriously ill to Myako Hospital. Once there it was easy to establish contacts with people in the town, either through the Asiatic doctors, dressers, nurses or servants ; and I think I am right in saying that the head boy here was arrested and brutally treated for helping us. John Long himself was arrested on the Double Tenth, and though he was brought back into camp some six months later when we were in Sime Road, he was taken out again and subsequently executed. He was a very sick man—and who wasn't after several months in the hands of the Japanese

Military Police—and he was in our camp hospital until, I suppose, the Japanese thought he was strong enough to be taken out and finished off officially. He was the only man actually executed. Apart from being concerned in contacts at the hospital, he was probably responsible for parts of wireless sets being brought in from the town, for this is how we managed to get our sets together, piece by piece.

Once in, sets were built by experts and reception started. The B.B.C. news was received and taken down in shorthand, and transcribed copies distributed throughout the camp; not of course to anybody and everybody, but to certain "readers." The actual secret of the working was pretty well kept, as was the whereabouts of the sets; in fact it is doubtful if everyone knew that there were actual sets in the camp. We were always warned about discussing news and told we couldn't be too careful. Adrian Clark, sometime second in command of the Selangor L.D.C., and in private life, Legal Adviser, F.M.S., was Camp Commandant at the time, and I know he warned the operators to be more careful and not to distribute news too often or too openly; but I'm afraid his warning fell on deaf ears. People would grumble if there was no news for a day or two, and would talk about it loudly. It really was sheer lunacy as we knew there were spies among us and we knew pretty well who one was. No names, no pack drill, and he wasn't British anyway.

Another thing the Japanese were out to stop was contacts with people in the town and our ways of getting cash. They were not quite the bloody fools that many people seemed to think they were, and it was quite obvious that we couldn't go on spending money on supplies at the rate we were, merely with the cash we had brought in and subsequently raised with their knowledge. As it was they confiscated—pinched, if you like—some 130,000 dollars which we had in the Central Fund at the time.

I also think that they imagined we had a transmitting set but we never had; and they probably regarded us as being of more danger to them than the P.O.W.s, owing to our knowledge of the country, the people and the languages. For all they knew, we might be stirring up revolt among the inhabitants of Singapore, but here I am afraid they overrated our activities and rather flattered us than otherwise.

A new regime seemed to be in force. Armed patrols clumped round the camp at all hours of the day and night, and all privileges such as concerts, lectures, classes, publication of our newspapers was stopped. They even stopped distributing their own equivalent of the *Straits Times*, the *Syonan Shinbun*, of which hitherto copies had always been delivered for our benefit. It was no great loss

except that it was something to read, and one could, by reading between the lines, get an inkling of how the war was going; especially if the Axis had had any success such as when the Germans nearly reached Alexandria. The Japanese must have been pretty hard put to it to find good news from their point of view for their own particular campaign, as they don't seem to have progressed much after their initial success. If they had a reverse they wouldn't refer to it at the time, but a week or so later mention it casually as a *fait accompli* assuming, as it were, that their readers knew all about it. They had installed a loud speaker in the Front Courtyard and up to the Double Tenth used to regale us with their version of the news; but after that date this was also stopped. Not that it was any great loss either; but it gave us some amusement at times. Strict instructions were issued by the Men's Representative—which should not have been but were necessary—that the Japanese news was not to be received with cat calls or the blowing of raspberries.

The School for the children was stopped, and no religious service was allowed to exceed thirty minutes and no sermons were permitted. Food and extras like coconuts, shop goods and tobacco were cut too.

A day or two after the Double Tenth, some of the Gestapo came in and found a wireless set in B yard, buried in the bank and inside a box-stool. For some reason this one had not been destroyed as had one or two others. Evidently the Gestapo had started their third degree on the unfortunates who had been taken out, and this was the first fruits of their "enquiries." During these next few days they also collected a few more internees, including Adrian Clark and the Bishop of Singapore; and, from the Women's Camp, the then Women's Representative, Mrs. Nixon, and Dr. Cecily Williams.

To sum up. Some fifty men and three women were taken out of camp by the Gestapo for interrogation. These "interrogations," which started by a "routine" beating up in the case of most of the men, went on for over six months. A few men were released within a few weeks, but of the rest none came back before the middle of March, 1944. Men and women alike were kept together in cells, mixed with Asiatic prisoners. They had to sit up all day, and the lights were left on all night. The only water supply was a squat latrine in one corner, and this was used for the purpose for which it was intended and for drinking and washing! Is it a wonder that these unfortunates contracted dysentery? If the men tried to screen the women in the cells they were beaten. These facts came to light later, for no one who came back to camp from the hands of the Gestapo was allowed to speak of his experiences,

A report signed by S. N. King and W. L. Blythe of the M.C.S. and by Professor Alexander has been published giving details of the treatment of these prisoners. A favourite form of " questioning " was for the victim to have four gallons of water poured into him, and then to have his stomach jumped on. They were given electric shocks ; beaten with iron bars ; half drowned. One doctor who was beaten and questioned for over fifty hours, jumped over the verandah and, in doing so, fractured his pelvis. He was examined by a Japanese doctor ; pronounced fit enough to undergo more questioning. He died subsequently. There was also a case of a Chinese who was put into a tub of methylated spirit which was then ignited ; and the pulling off of a couple of finger nails was a mild torture to what some of the Chinese underwent.

Altogether about a dozen men succumbed to this treatment ; among whom were Hugh Fraser, the acting Colonial Secretary, and Adrian Clark. Clark died in Myako Hospital from " dysentery," but Fraser and several others were brought back to camp in a dreadful state of emaciation and dysentery, and died within twenty-four hours. Without doubt it was never intended that they should live, but the Japanese daren't actually execute them ; they let them die—sheer bloody murder. Eventually after almost a year, all except four men were released. The four who remained —Calderwood, Cherry, Curtis and Earle—were sentenced to terms of imprisonment, which they were serving when Japan capitulated.

There were other repercussions from the Double Tenth. No more patients were sent to Myako Hospital. A mail had just been sorted and we actually knew how many letters we had each, but this was held up and we didn't get it until Christmas, and only then because we were asked if there was anything special we would like, and all we asked for was our mail. I don't seem to have touched on this subject hitherto, so I'd better remedy the omission. To start with : Outward Mail. This won't take long as there was so little of it ! We were allowed to send one postcard in June 1942, and, in the majority of cases, this didn't arrive ; as the plane carrying it crashed over or near Ireland. The next card was written—I say written as God only knows when it was sent—in November 1942. This reached our people in August, 1943. The next was written in May, 1943, and reached Home at Christmas, 1944. Two other cards were written in August and October, 1944, but never arrived. Various radio messages were sent but few of these received, and those that were were mainly in Australia. I think the Japanese had some underlying motive in allowing us to send these radio messages, as they always insisted on our putting " radio reply." They probably wanted to find out if their broadcasts were being picked up. Some of the messages received

were as originally written; others "edited" by the Japanese. A certain number of radio replies were received. With regard to inward mail, the first letters received arrived in June 1943; the next lot in August the same year; the next was the batch which was held up. After that there were quite a number of deliveries; but, of course they arrived in batches—sometimes the most recent would bear post marks of only three months ago—but the later deliveries of letters and cards were invariably held up for "censoring," and delivery would be made in driblets after the letters had been in camp for three months. A deliberate form of mental cruelty on the part of the Japanese.

I suppose most people regarded the deprivation of tobacco as one of the worst results of the Double Tenth, and I don't seem to have touched much on the subject. Decent tobacco disappeared practically at once and we were smoking cigarettes and cheroots made from local tobacco, as well as very coarse Java shag—known as Sikh's Beard—and some not too bad pipe tobacco. At one time too, there was an issue of cigarettes and cheroots, but in the main we had to rely on what we could buy. The cheroots, normally about a cent. each, were sold at ten cents; the cigarettes, so far as I can remember, at about two cents; the shag at about thirty cents an ounce; and the better quality stuff at eighty cents a reputed two ounces (latterly it was seldom more than one). After the Double Tenth, when all tobacco was practically finished, a cheroot fetched a dollar and a half, and this was before the exchange went mad. It was strange the effect of no tobacco on the camp as a whole. I remember one evening everyone was sitting or lying about on their beds doing nothing in particular, when word came in that "The Blue Angel," by which soubriquet the supply lorry was known, had arrived with smokes. Immediately the atmosphere changed and the room was filled with the buzz of conversation.

Our own stocks of food were getting pretty low by this time, so the cut in our ration came at a bad time. Evening Kungi was cut out and all we got was a bun. Private cooking was stopped, but in any case we were getting short of anything to cook. Eggs disappeared for some months from the menu, and coconuts. It is disgraceful when one thinks of the natural resources of the country that we were so badly fed. Of course it is the policy in all internment camps to keep the diets on the low side, as it reduces the desire on the part of the prisoner to revolt, but it should have been so easy to let us have even coconuts or red palm oil. We rarely saw a coconut after the Double Tenth right up to the end, and most of the palm oil we got we had to pay for. If we asked for such things we were told lack of transport was the difficulty.

Fish should have been plentiful, but when we did get it, it was the most weird assortment from the piscine world that you could imagine. I refer to salt fish here. At first it used to be fried whole, but later it was usually made into a paste, which resembled a very strong bloater paste. It stank to high heaven, but we got almost to like it. Sometimes we got a small fish, Ikan Bilis, which resembled a third rate whitebait, but which we found, with our degenerated palates, almost fit for human food. This fish fodder was full of proteins and all that sort of thing, so we did our best with it.

The Japanese throughout the Changi period, seemed to take a delight in exhibiting us to selected parties who were conducted round the camp, usually on a Sunday afternoon. We might be having a lie off, when the warning cry, " Kyotsuke ! " would be heard off, and we'd have to stand to attention while the party approached. " Kyotsuke " means attention ; when the party got abreast of us, the nearest internee would cry out, " Keiri ! " (bow), and, when they had gone, the order, " Yasume " (stand at ease) would be given. We had to learn and use these words. These parties always made a point of going round the Women's camp, and, as a rule, went into the kitchen. The menu for the day used to be chalked up outside, and to read it might give the impression that we were being well fed ; and, after a press photographer was noticed taking a photograph of it, the practice was discontinued : also a sample breakfast, dinner and tea for one man was displayed in the kitchen for any visitors to see. This did some good, as, on one occasion, during the very lean days, a new general came round and he expressed some surprise at the small quantity we were getting, and in the evening Kungi was restored. We were also rather short of containers for such things as fishpaste, and there were always several pans taken from commodes in use for these. It was one of Tominaga's stock jokes to point these out to visitors. A most unpleasant man !

And so life went on. Dreary, deadly monotony, with little to mark one day from another. Rumours were always rife and we were constantly being buoyed up by talks of exchange and repatriation. I think there was something in them, as undoubtedly two of our interpreters had been exchanged. There were references to it in the *Shinbun*, the Japanese newspaper, and the Japanese talked about it too. It may have been part of their " mental cruelty " treatment, but they often used to say : " Don't worry ; you'll be out soon," and things like that ; and working parties would contact other parties from the P.O.W. Camp who would relate the same thing. Or perhaps some Japanese officer visiting would drop hints that exchange was imminent. People would ask :

" How's the Exchange Market to-day ?" and be told it was rising or slumping badly, as the case might be. There was more point in these questions than might appear on the surface, as bets were continually being made on the date of release, and odds would lengthen or shorten according to the latest rumour. Sweepstakes were run in various parts of the camp after the fashion of the ones on a ship's run. A floor might allocate a date between a high and a low field to every participant ; but I think these sweeps found no takers after the first period had expired, which would be around August, 1942. Money was tight and a dollar had more uses than to be left in a sweepstake, so all cash was refunded. Once a relief ship passed through with American internees for exchange, and this sent exchange rocketting. She was the *Gripsholm*, and we could see her from the top of C Block, lying off Changi Point. She was allowed no contact with the shore, however, although she had mail for us on board, and had to go on to Goa and back before the mail might be delivered. The American internees certainly thought they were going to be repatriated, and one American padre went so far as to preach a farewell sermon. Rumours, by the way, were known as " Latrinograms "—a word which speaks for itself !

XIII.

A MONTH or two after the Double Tenth, the Main Yard was closed as three new huts were to be built there by Chinese labour brought in from outside. This meant the reduction of our exercising space by half. The huts, which were built entirely of attaps (palm leaf), and rough woodposts, were erected on the football pitch ; and the workmen put up their own shacks on a nice piece of grass, about the size of a bowling green, which a few internees had planted with care, and on which, if you could find room, it was rather pleasant to sit in the evening. It was familiarly known as " Swilldumpton Green " as the main swill pits where the " Wet Refuse " was dumped were just beyond. As a matter of interest to ornithologists, a fathead of a kingfisher built its nest in one of these. Mention of Swilldumpton Green reminds me of one or two other names adopted for various sections of the camp, which were used officially also by our committee. The punishment block, which was included in D, though it was an offshoot of it, was known from the very first as " Hudson's Bay," as Hudson, well-known for his broadcasts before the fall of Singapore on " A.R.P. and You !" lived there. The cells here were sometimes referred to as " Igloos." Those who were quartered near the administration block at one time called their quarters " Victory," but

after the episode of the V on the theatre it was thought advisable to change it to " Highgate." The Jews were quartered in what was at one time the rice store looking on to the front courtyard, and this was known as " Aldgate," while the aged and infirm lived near the hospital in " Cripplegate." The women had names for different parts of their camp, notably, the " Dungeon " and the " Rose Garden " ; and their own name for their camp was " The Bitches' Barracks."

Roll calls, which had been continued every Saturday morning since the Double Tenth in the Main Yard, were now held in each block yard. The new huts were finished but were not occupied until January, 1944. A mixed bag of internees was brought in, including a few Europeans among whom was Dr. Ryrie of the Leper Asylum at Sungei Buloh, near Kuala Lumpur, who had stayed at his post.

After the first eight months or so in Changi, labour was not so plentiful ; partly because men were going sick or developing minor ailments such as boils which kept them away from work for quite considerable periods ; or even minor abrasions which in our debilitated condition seemed to take months to heal. A certain amount of Beri-beri too was present and other tropical and deficiency diseases like Pellagra. In addition quite a large piece of land immediately around the prison was developed for vegetable growing, and this absorbed a lot more men too.

In April, 1944, we were informed that there was a new general taking over, General Saito, and that he wished to address us all on a matter of importance. The Exchange Market hardened at once ! Still he made a rather ineffectual address inefficiently translated by an interpreter, the gist of which was that he was very sorry for us, but he himself had not been home for seven years, and that we must do our best to keep ourselves fit for the day when we would go home to our wives and families, and, of course, that we must be good boys. However, one of the interpreters made the remark that later on became a sort of catch phrase amongst us, " Lagi satu bulan, semua gedi banyak banyak baik," which being translated means : " In another month everything will be hunky dory." But at the end of April we found that all he referred to was our transfer to Sime Road Camp, which took place on May 1st, 1944. Still, on the strength of his words, the die-hard optimists among us insisted that this would be merely a clearing station before we were sent down to the docks and shipped off home. There was a story floating round that Anthony Eden had broadcast a speech in which he said that the British Government were not satisfied with the way in which the Japanese were treating their prisoners, and this transfer may have been some-

thing to do with this. It is a fact that one internee received a postcard some months later addressed to Sime Road before we moved ; so it looks as if the Japanese informed our Government that the move had been effected even before it was. I think the general opinion was that we didn't want to move unless it was a move towards home. We had got used to the discomfort of Changi and didn't know that we'd be as well off elsewhere.

XIV.

SO now we come to the third period. It took four days to shift us, bag and baggage, and there were five hundred lorry loads of internees, their effects and camp equipment taken over. Sime Road Camp is what used to be the old R.A.F. camp and headquarters, and lies out adjoining the Singapore Golf Course—between it and Adam Park and Watten Estate, both residential areas. It is very nearly the centre of the island, five miles out along the Bukit Timah Road and about a mile to the East of it. The Camp comprised some seventy acres of undulating land, which had been a rubber estate at one time. Huts were dotted about here and there, connected for the most part by concrete paths, and in some places shaded, probably for camouflage reasons, by rubber trees. The original huts had been destroyed ; but whether by the Japanese or our troops, I don't know. It was here the fighting on the island finished. The huts into which we were herded, were temporary affairs with rough plank walls about six feet high, and attap roofs, many of which leaked badly. The concrete floors were in a very bad state of repair. Still, we were used to living like and being treated worse than coolies, and it was a very pleasant feeling to get away from the grey walls, the dusty yards, the bars, and to see the green of the grass and trees. We were still as crowded as ever, but there was more of a feeling of liberty about the place. In Changi it was forbidden to stand and look out of the windows at the end of the blocks on the higher floors, from where you could get a good view of the sea and the island. From the yard in block D we had to content ourselves with watching how much more we could see of some casurina trees growing outside, as the months went by.

The months drag slowly by ; so we expend
Our fitful energy as best we may :
Each day a little work, a little play,
Or in some oft-read book regain a friend.
Restricted, overcrowded, we have known
The camaraderie that sorrows send :
Though there are times we yearn a chance to spend
Just a few hours in some quiet spot, alone.

At length the night falls : then, perhaps, it seems
We have our wish : and, as we lie awake
Through the long night, it may be that we take
Our thoughts where fancy pleases : or in dreams
Wander in pleasant places far away
With those we love and long for every day.

Bag and baggage was the expression I used. You never saw such a collection of junk as formed part of the latter ! When you start life with nothing except as much as you can carry, it is extraordinary what value insignificant articles possess, and how the magpie instinct develops in every one. I think no one took a chair or table into Changi, but the chairs, stools, tables, shelves and cupboards that came out of it had to be seen to be believed ! And the tins and odd bits of plank and some of the beds ! Each man had a stool of some description ; some of them what Stalky once described as " a collapsible jamboree " with canvas ; others just a wooden box affair ; but they had all been made out of old bully cases and the like, and odd bits of timber scrounged from somewhere. Naturally before we left Changi everyone went through his personal belongings and threw out things he couldn't easily pack or thought he might do without, but all this accumulation of junk was gone through by less fortunate internees before it was finally consigned to the bonfire. Even odd shoes and torn shirts and shorts were rescued, for clothing was becoming a real problem for some who had come in with little more than they stood up in, and many did.

Cooking in the new camp presented a bit of a problem, but it was soon solved, as the engineers soon got open " kualies " built into clay and brick fire places. Instead of having one central kitchen six were made ; for naturally with the population spread about over an area of seventy acres, distribution presented a difficulty. Strangely enough, though we were nearly at our lowest ebb for food, I think on the whole the food was better cooked and had more variety about it than in Changi where the facilities were better and the cooks supposed to be more expert. It also afforded a good opportunity to get rid of some of the cooks, who had become to believe themselves indispensable and were inclined to trade on it. The materials they had to use were much the same—rice, spinach, sweet potato, tapioca, salt fish and palm oil—but they turned out such things as " Curry Puffs," " Savoury Pasties," " Dumplings " and sweet sauce. With different kitchens feeding the areas, it also introduced an element of rivalry, which was a good thing.

We stuck to the same blocks as in Changi, only here B. block

became Kita or Northern Area; C, Minami or Southern Area; and D, Chuo or Central Area. From various parts of the camp Government House, Fort Canning, the Cathay and the Grand Stand at the Race Course could be seen. There were two cemeteries of British Troops in the Camp, and various isolated graves of Japanese soldiers.

Vegetable growing was started as soon as possible with seedlings and cuttings brought over from Changi, and in a few months we had the vegetable output back again at eight to ten ounces of green leaf a man a day. This meant we were producing over a ton of green leaf a day at our best, and in addition to this we produced nearly half a ton of root vegetable daily, mainly sweet potato. The Japanese were all for us becoming self-supporting, but the more we produced the less green stuff they sent in. The General was dotty on the subject of papayas and these were planted all over the place. However they had, for the most part, to be picked green and used green as a vegetable; for if one was allowed to ripen on a tree, some misguided person would pinch it during the night. And the penalty for being found in unlawful possession of a papaya was anything up to three weeks' solitary confinement, awarded by our own Tribunal.

In order to get more work done, the Japanese now introduced the system of feeding us according to the work we did. At the top of the scale came the wood-cutters, who for some time, quite rightly, had been given extra food. Then there was the full-time worker, the part-time worker and the non-worker. The last category included the man who couldn't work through old age or infirmity, the man who was off work because he was sick and the rather rare bird, the gentleman of leisure who didn't choose to work. It was rather unfair on the man who was drawing less food because he'd gone sick, very likely through some ailment contracted working, as it didn't give him so good a chance to recover. Full time work meant a six-hour day too now, which was quite enough on the low scale of rations in the heat of the day; for work started at 9 a.m. and finished at 5 p.m. with two hours off for dinner, but this was really 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. according to the sun and meant one was working when the sun was at its zenith.

The Japanese then started looking for fresh areas to put under cultivation, and work was started about a mile from the camp on the side of the Dunearn Road, which runs parallel to the Bukit Timah Road. Two hundred men were required for this, morning and afternoon, and they were drawn from the garden. It was from this time that the "Scrounge" system was elaborated and recognised officially, instead of being kiboshed from the start. I may be alone in my opinion here, but I don't think so.

The two hundred men who comprised this fatigue at Dunearn Road were supposed to be men capable of doing two hours' heavy digging, and that is the reason that men who went in the morning were not supposed to go in the afternoon; they could take it easy in the garden on the other shift, but anyone knows who has tried it that there is plenty of heavy work in the garden if one is to make a success of it; and a couple of hours' watering is quite strenuous. But I seem to digress; there were small shops out at Dunearn Road, and a whip round among the fatigue was made and the sum of about four hundred dollars used to be collected, and, if the Japanese sentry seemed to be amenable, he was approached with a view to his buying cheroots for the fatigue. If he agreed it meant each man got from ten to twenty cheroots, while the sentry of course made a good thing out of it for himself. At this time cheroots were even better than cash, so if one didn't smoke one could barter cheroots against sugar. In order that everyone in camp could get in on this cheroot racket, it seemed that any cripple who could hobble out would get detailed for the fatigue, so it meant that those men who were capable of working would have to carry the others.

The Japanese must have tumbled to the fact that they weren't getting the work done as quickly as they should with the numbers that were employed—they kept a pretty strict eye on Labour returns, as the daily amount of food issued by them was calculated on these—and so they demanded a regular gang of two hundred who would work morning and evening in return for an extra hundred grams of rice a day. They got it and the gang elected a leader; at the same time a secretary and treasurer to keep the books, and they all subscribed so much into the pool and each week there was a distribution among them of whatever the sentry chose to buy. It didn't stop at cheroots now; coffee, gula malacca and palm oil were also bought. And everyone was happy—but the sentry most of all!

Later on more areas were opened up, including a large portion of the golf course which was planted with tapioca, and more gangs were formed on the same lines. The rival sentries in charge of the gangs seemed to vie with each other in what they would bring in for them. All the time the garden was being milked of all its heavy workers who were out for what they could get; for the gardeners rarely got the chance of a scrounge; nor did they draw extra rations; yet they were doing most essential work and keeping the camp supplied with nearly half its daily ration, weight for weight, at the end, whereas the tapioca planters might almost be called non-producers. I can see I'm going to make myself very unpopular in some quarters (if this is ever published and anyone

reads so far), but I've not finished yet. The last straw was the digging of the famous tunnels. What they were for I don't think anyone really knows, but I don't think they were for our benefit, whatever was said to the contrary. The Japanese said they were for the benefit of the camp; but that might have meant for the occupants of the camp after we had gone and their troops were there. I fancy they were some sort of defence work in the event of an attack. They consisted of U shaped tunnels dug into the hills in and around the camp, and as an inducement to get the labour for these still more food was offered—extra rice, tapioca, sugar, tea and oil (and scrounge). They got the required labour; the food was a great inducement, but it is a moot point whether the extra food replaced the extra energy required for the work. And of course it is quite possible that had the Japanese not got the labour they would have employed forced labour. It was becoming more like a labour camp every day.

At the time of which I am writing, *viz.*, February, 1945—onwards, food had reached its lowest level. In the old days 600 grams was the nominal ration, but this was cut to 300 for a worker, 250 for a part-time worker and 200 for a non-worker. These figures refer to grams of cereal a day, mainly rice. Three hundred grams is about 10 ounces, and to get an idea of how much it is, let us compare it with the Tamil coolie's rice ration under the Rice-Rationing Scheme. He was allowed 6 gantangs a month. A gantang is 6 katties, and 6 katties is nearly 128 ounces. Therefore 6 times 128 ounces is 768 ounces a month or something over 25 ounces a day. Our daily ration was, therefore, 10 ounces of cereal, 8 ounces of green vegetable, a little root vegetable and an ounce or so of fish paste and a little palm oil. These last two items were not always available. We were issued with 4 to 6 ounces of sugar every ten days. Very often the palm oil and fish were not on the Japanese ration, but stuff we had paid for ourselves. We were always doing the Oliver and asking for more, and on one occasion it was fish we asked for. We were told it was unobtainable. A day or two later, we were told that though the Japanese couldn't let us have it, we might buy some. We did—and the cost for a lorry load was fantastic; something like £1,500. And this for stuff which normally might be used as manure.

Some of the Japanese high finance was a bit over our heads too. There was one occasion when we were told that the Tokyo Red Cross wanted to present the camp with two cows. [We ran a small dairy farm, but not too successfully, as the stock died of the same deficiency diseases as those from which we were suffering. This was revealed in post mortems]. The cost of these cows would be forty-five thousand dollars. Tokyo had not

sent the cash, but would we advance it out of our funds, or have a whip round for the amount ? The Japanese were told this was not possible ; so they offered to lend us the money out of the money they took from us on the Double Tenth. At the same time, only a few weeks before, they had insisted that everyone handed in any cash over and above a hundred dollars that he might hold, and it would be banked in Singapore. It's probably still there.

A few months later they called for a return of all gold and valuables in our possession, and offered to take these over in exchange for cheese, sugar, coffee, etc.

I said there was more variety about our meals in Sime Road. Well, this isn't exactly correct. Breakfast and dinner remained the same practically daily ; and dinner now consisted of rice with spinach soup, with no tinned supplies. There might be ikan bilis to help it out or fishpaste. It was at tea that the cooks excelled themselves with their pasties and whatnots ; the " pastry " being made largely from sweet potato. It seems absurd now to think I have sat down, day after day, and eaten dry rice with a dollop of spinach on it, and liked it—and wanted more ! At times one would be late coming in to a meal and eat the stuff cold and still think it was good. When the cut in rations came in February, 1945, rice disappeared from the dinner menu, and we just had Spinach Soup. The hours of work were reduced to four for a full-time worker, but if you were on one of the jobs which carried extra rations, six hours was expected.

XV.

HEALTH in Sime Road was not so good. I don't mean the, what you might call, normal deficiency and debility diseases, as naturally these were on the increase ; but there was quite an outbreak of Malaria, whereas we were comparatively free from this in Changi. We were living in an area which used to be controlled by the Rural Health Board, and this control included anti-malarial measures ; but since the Japanese had taken over, this had all gone to pot. Another disease, which unfortunately proved fatal in quite a number of cases, was Tropical Typhus. There was a lot of high lallang grass all over and round the camp when we moved in ; and all this had to be kept cut, and it was from this that most of the internees who contracted this disease got it. It is carried by a parasite of a rat, which leaves the rat and takes time off on a blade of long grass and waits for a passing human on which to feed for a change. So a special lallang gang had to be kept, who had to wear special clothes and take a bath in disinfectant every time they came off duty. The incidence of this

disease got less and less, and I should like here to pay a tribute to our doctors. We were very lucky in having first-class men, and they worked hard all the time, both in looking after us when sick and in watching our diets and advising the committee how to make best use of our scanty rations. The Health Department should not be forgotten either, as their efforts undoubtedly kept down disease. The surgeons, dentists and chemists must not be forgotten either. Shortage of drugs and dressings was a great handicap, and many makeshift remedies were applied. I fancy palm oil was the basis of many of the strange unguents with which our sores were smeared, and a few rusty nails shaken up in the odd spot of H_2O provided Iron Tonic. Bandages soaked in rubber latex provided a good substitute for Elastoplast; and even rubber seeds were recommended for cases of debility; for apparently, apart from a spot of Prussic Acid, they have a high Vitamin B content. Therefore, "any internee found tapping a rubber tree with intent to use the latex therefrom for his own use; or any internee found to be in unlawful possession of a rubber seed, will be prosecuted with the utmost rigour of the Law." Another genius manufactured spectacle frames from old tooth brush handles; and there was a "Tooth Powder Manufacturing Fatigue." Wood ash was, I think the basis of this.

And talking of things medical, there was the famous medical inspection carried out by the Japanese Doctor. It took place between two and five one afternoon, and in that time this superman medically examined some three thousand five hundred men. It happened in the middle of 1945, and was either just plain "face-saving" should any questions be asked later concerning the medical welfare provided for the internees; or it may have been a sort of round up to pass everyone who could walk as fit for fatigue. Apart from this parade, there were two others in Sime Road; the first, a roll call held on the golf course soon after we arrived; and the second a roll call by nationalities—which probably sent the Exchange Market soaring!

Towards the end of 1944, new attaps huts were built here and there. The work was done by our men, and the huts were to house another "bag" of about a thousand internees. There were no Europeans amongst this lot. Some of them had been in camps in places like Bahau and the like, under sort of "protective" arrest, but now they were herded in with us. There were quite a number of decent fellows among them; but on the other hand, well, I'll put it this way—there was a regular crime wave throughout the camp. Nothing was safe, from a piece of soap in the hut to a sweet potato in the garden. Our first escapers were amongst this crowd too. At first I believe it was only a question of people

wandering out at night and visiting their friends; but anyhow some were caught, and in consequence roll calls, morning and evening, by huts were started. There never was any difficulty in getting out of the place, but, in the case of a European, where was he going? He would have to rely on the goodwill of everyone outside and there seemed very little point in trying it.

I am not sure when the exchange first started to go mad. I mean the dollar exchange this time. Even before the Japanese captured Singapore—in fact as soon as they landed in Kelantan, Japanese printed notes began to be introduced, but these did not become a currency of their own really until we had been in Sime Road some months. While there was a good deal of Straits Currency about, as during the first part of our internment, no distinction was made between a Straits Dollar and a "Banana" Dollar. The expression "Banana" originated with the Malays, as on some of the notes (which were a copy of the Straits notes) a banana tree was a prominent part of the design. Money was tight in Changi, unless you could sell something; and if you wanted to cash a cheque, even a Traveller's cheque, you would be lucky if you got forty dollars for your £10. In fact, it was very difficult to raise money by this means. However, in Sime Road it was different. Instead of the dollars being rated equally, seven banana dollars was the usual rate of exchange for one dollar Straits, if the deal was in notes. As regards the cashing of cheques, the rate of exchange varied from 1¼ to 1, to 3 to 1, though this last was rare. Of course, the whole thing was a ramp, as in actual fact the banana note was worthless. The Jews, of course, ran the exchange business, and certain of them were hand-in-glove with the Japanese; otherwise how could the money have come in? There were two methods for an exchange broker to get his money; the first by buying goods, gold chiefly, but later clothing fetched quite a high price; the second by accepting a cheque from the representative of one of the banks. The broker would then put the deal through with his Japanese pal, and the money would come in. At least that is how I supposed it worked; at any rate there was no lack of banana money at the end, and prices were fantastic, not to say extortionate. One would have thought that if this sort of thing were to be allowed, some responsible person should have seen to it that a better rate of exchange was given for our cheques. One of the excuses given was: "Oh, you must think of the risk the poor man is taking and the number of dud cheques that must be flying round." To hell with that argument! If half the cheques were dud the broker was still on velvet.

I will now give an idea of some of the prices of articles usually obtainable—the period is April, 1945, onwards. Eggs up to

THE
JAPANESE
GOVERNMENT
PROMISES TO PAY THE BEARER
ON DEMAND
TEN DOLLARS
MN
MN
10
10
10

30 dollars each; Bully Beef, 325/-; a tin containing 14 biscuits, 300/-; ¾ lb. tin jam, 200/-; American cigarettes, 125/- for 20, and so on. Sugar, salt, coffee, fetched 7/- an ounce and palm oil 20/- a half pint. "Gula Malacca" was about the same price as sugar. These prices are in banana money, so even if you got three to one for your sterling or Straits cheque, you were still paying through the nose. Unfortunately we were hungry and preferred to do so. There were cases too of actual sterling cheques being given for goods: a 2 lb. tin of Klim fetched £100, and the same size tin of butter, £80.

Where did these goods come from? Well, scrounge, of course, brought in a certain amount. Then there was a weird institution known as "The Grey Market" in which prices were a bit more reasonable than those quoted, which were the Black Market ones. Again I am a bit vague on the working of the Grey Market; I mean as to how the goods came in; but it must have been started by the Japanese guards and/or interpreters seeing a chance of making a bit, suggesting to one of their pals amongst us—and I regret to say there were such—that he could bring the stuff in in bulk. Anyhow it came in lorries; officially each merchant kept it secret from the next, and the camp commandant was not supposed to know; but I expect he did and was exercising his prerogative of "honourable squeeze." But should one of the recently arrived internees—or, I suppose anyone who could make a contact with someone in the town—manage to smuggle in something over the fence, he would be detected immediately and hailed off to the guard room and beaten up. Of course we all benefited from these rather nefarious doings, but it involved a certain amount of fraternization which should have been stopped, as it is, to quote "1066 and All That," "a bad thing."

I still haven't answered the question as to where a lot of the stuff came from; in fact I am getting rather involved altogether, but it is rather difficult to weave all the happenings in camp into an orderly pattern and keep each event in its proper chronological order.

In March, 1945, about six thousand parcels arrived for us. These were not actually the first we had had, for some arrived from Lourenço Marques, in August, 1942. However, these only worked out at one among seven. But this time it was over one a man! Naturally, the Japanese held them up, I suppose because "they know it teases." We asked the Commandant for them, and he said we must ask the General; and we couldn't ask the General unless we first asked the Commandant if we might ask the General, and so on. Eventually the General was asked and permission was granted for us to have them. We waited a week and nothing

happened. Then we asked again and were told that we could have them, but that they must last over a period of six months, and therefore they would be released at the rate of one parcel between thirty-five men. Collinge, the Men's Representative at the time, told the Commandant that, under those circumstances, we didn't want them. They were our parcels and we had a right to them, and it was all or none. After all, we had been three years practically without any comforts of that sort, so what the hell? However, sometime in May we got them; or rather we got one each to be going on with. The remainder, except for fifty or so which we had to present to the Japanese staff at the rate of one each from the General down, went into store for issue at a later date. It was the Commandant who suggested or rather, hinted, that it would be a nice gesture on our part to make this presentation to the General, and, in fact, he was rather surprised we had not done so. But were the parcels good!

The trouble was they were rather too good and whetted our appetites for more. Hence another reason for all the raising of the wind that went on. It was a great game. The Jews—I don't want to malign them as a whole, so let me say, certain of the Jews—bought up the tinned stuff wholesale; then quoted cheap prices, or what were considered cheap, like bully at only 275 dollars; there was a general rush to cash cheques, but for some reason it was difficult to get money just now, and only 1¼ banana dollars could be given for a Straits dollar. Of course in a few days 2 to 1 could be obtained, so why not wait? You were had either way. If you waited, the price of the goods had risen again—"*bithness*," I suppose.

XVII.

AND now I am very near the end of this part of our internment. There are one or two things I have not mentioned at all, and the first is the arrangements made for the meetings of relatives in the Men's and Women's Camps. That should be easily done, for at first there were none at all. The first official meeting was on Christmas Day, 1942, when relatives were allowed to meet for two hours in the morning; and there were subsequent occasional meetings up to the Double Tenth; then, of course they stopped. There used to be unofficial meetings when husbands and wives would get on to the Refuse Emptying Fatigue; for then the woman carried the stuff to the entrance of the women's camp in the front courtyard, and the man took over from her; and if sentries were a bit slack, he might have a word with her.

In Sime Road regular weekly meetings were instituted. As a matter of fact, some of the privileges which we had enjoyed before

the Double Tenth were re-introduced. School for the children was re-started; concerts were allowed twice a week and sermons were again permitted. No more classes or lectures were sanctioned, however.

As regards news, vernacular papers were being smuggled into the camp, so we got a certain amount of rather unreliable news all the time in Sime Road. Naturally, one had to be very careful, and there was no reading out of any news; and, to a certain extent, it was kept secret. Rumours, of course, were as rife as ever and one didn't quite know what or how much to believe. A thing which made things confusing was that the papers were printed in English, Japanese, Chinese, Tamil, Malay and Hindustani, and the contents were not always the same; as the Japanese acted on the principle that what was good for their Chinese speaking readers to know mightn't be so hot for their Malay customers, and so they seemed to edit the news accordingly. At least that is part of my explanation as to different accounts of the same news going round. The other part is the question of translating say, from Japanese in the first place to Hindustani in the second; and then the Hindustani being rendered into English by the internee who translated it. The variation might be more with Chinese with their rather curious method of writing. The main thing was we were getting some news; and we had a good idea things were not going too well for Japan; we heard of the collapse of Germany fairly soon after it happened.

Then one Sunday morning, on November 5th to be precise, about a dozen large bombers suddenly appeared over in the direction of Seletar, and the Ack, Ack (or should I say "flak"?) opened up. We couldn't believe our eyes or ears, and quite, for the moment, thought it was some special A.R.P. practice. However we were soon convinced it was the real thing. This was the first of a series of raids, about half a dozen in all, on the Naval Base, the Docks and the Oil Depots. On two occasions over a hundred bombers took part in the raid—unfortunately at least one was lost—and there was one splendid night raid. It was good to see the sky filled with black smoke again, which burnt for days; and it was better to see the Allied planes sailing over, quite unconcerned by the anti-aircraft fire or the presence of Japanese fighters. I say the presence of fighters, but I rarely saw one anywhere near our planes; still I had better not say too much: our aerial defence of Singapore in 1942, was no better. These raids ceased in March, 1945, but there was scarcely a day without one or two reconnaissance planes being over; and it did us a world of good to see them. We were disappointed to see no Japanese "Wild Eagles" attempt. "Bushido" and "crash dive on to their targets." Like the Greeks, we had a word for that too.

XVIII.

AND now for the final phase. It was on Sunday night, August 12th, 1945, that we heard through our usual source, a smuggled vernacular newspaper, that Russia had entered the war against Japan. The general opinion was that this would probably end the war, at the latest, within three months. For some time we had been saying that if the end came to-morrow it would not surprise us, and that we expected to be out at the end of the year. " Home for Christmas " was a very popular slogan.

On Monday evening the fatigue parties working on the hospital hill, which looked towards the town, reported that the masts at the wireless station were being taken down, or rather, were being crashed down. This, of course, started a fresh crop of rumours, but many thought it must presage peace. Still, we'd been " had " so often that I think the majority were sceptical.

On Tuesday the fatigue parties that normally worked outside were not sent out, and that again was taken as an indication that something was in the air. However, to dash our hopes, and to cheer us up generally, the Japanese issued orders that as from Monday next, the firewood used at the kitchens must be reduced by half. Anything that was likely to affect our bellies naturally put a damper on things.

It was Thursday that contact was made with a P.O.W. working party which informed us that their Commanding Officer had told them peace had been signed ; and later a lorry of P.O.W.s drove past the camp and shouted in : " Why don't you stop work ? The war is over ! " Still we had no official intimation. On Saturday work on the tunnels was stopped and the tunnellers ordered to return their tools to store. Then a report went round that the remaining Red Cross parcels were to be delivered. This turned out to be correct, and there was a welcome issue all round of a tin or two a man. One of our men asked a Japanese who was in charge of a tunnelling gang if it were true, and this chap burst into tears and said, " *Ta' buleh chakap skerang—basoh buleh tau.*" (" I can't speak now—to-morrow you'll know "). Other tearful Japanese were reported.

At about half past eight it came in—at least it reached our hut—from an " irrefutable " source that in the paper dated 17th, it was stated that the war was over. One more fact seemed to clinch it. It was announced officially that everyone in the camp would receive 500 grams of rice a day as from to-morrow—that is, Sunday August 19th. At last !

XIX.

FROM now on I think I had better give extracts from my diary, which I restarted as soon as it was known the war was over. The

gong which was the signal to get up went as usual on Sunday at 7.30. Roll call took place at 8 o'clock, but no Japanese took it. This signified nothing, for, as often as not, we would parade and be dismissed by our area commandant, without a Japanese having put in an appearance at all. While waiting on roll call, the hum of conversation was very noticeable, which was a sure indication of the feeling of the camp. Tails were well up.

Work went on as usual as far as the essential services were concerned. But the food! Breakfast—a real thick kungi; dinner—rice, fish, tapioca and vegetable soup, and prawn fritter; supper—fried rice, savoury slice, curry sauce. Not so much the quality, but the quantity. Why, some people couldn't manage it all, though they had no trouble in finding someone to help them out. It was regarded as a most heinous offence to throw anything away. Probably our stomachs had contracted, for there was a time when we'd have managed this amount with ease.

Evening roll call was held but again in the absence of any Japanese. Later, the area commandant came round each hut and announced that the four men, Calderwood, Cherry, Curtis and Earle, who were serving sentences in prison for offences committed in connection with our news service, had been released and brought into camp.

On Monday afternoon, Collinge, the Men's Representative, circulated a notice giving a report of an interview he had had with the General, in which the General said that it was possible that we were all going back to our normal lives. He pointed out, however, that the precise moment had not arrived, nor was it known. Negotiations were in progress and we must wait for the final decision. In the meantime, the Nipponese remained in control of the camp. He emphasised the great importance of maintaining the camp on its normal basis, and taking care to avoid any act or word which might lead to "incidents." He also mentioned that during the period of his control of the camp, he had done his best for the welfare of internees by supplying them with essentials, of which, unfortunately, there had been a severe shortage. He also regretted the unavoidable deaths of a number of internees. Thus the General! Lieutenant Suzuki, the Camp Commandant, stressed the fact that there was still some uncertainty as to the final decision, and warned the camp that as long as the Nipponese remained in charge there must be no demonstrations of any kind, such as singing, cheering or the display of flags. Roll calls and brown-outs were to continue.

An unofficial account of the meeting was circulated by John Weekley, who was Area Commandant. In it he said that the Japanese seemed very upset, and that Tominaga had interrupted

Suzuki and said that in every army there were decent men and rough men, and that should there be any breach of discipline it might lead to something more serious than summary punishment (face slapping). He hoped !

On Wednesday, August 22nd, we got a report that our troops would take over at midnight, 24th-25th. We were getting very tired of sitting and waiting ; work had been reduced to a minimum and only essential work was going on. We were mostly sleeping badly as well. Too keyed up, I suppose. A certain amount of news came in, and we heard of the Atomic bombs being dropped on Japan for the first time. We had heard that Japan was being battered both from the air and sea some months ago. The time seemed to be crawling worse than it had done during any part of our internment.

On August 24th the General told Collinge and Miss Hegarty, the Women's Representative, that the war really was over, but that it was unlikely we should get away before the end of the month. He said 'planes might be over any time from 5 a.m. on Saturday to drop supplies. Roll calls stopped on Saturday, and the ban on lights was lifted too.

XX.

Extract from Diary.

August 27th.—We are still in Japanese hands and still awaiting release, but our treatment is somewhat better and we are getting more food—of a kind. However, there are signs that there may be an improvement here. Seven ounces of real Cold Storage Butter per man was issued yesterday ; all cold and frozen, straight from the cold chamber where it has been for three and a half years ! We hear, too, there is cheese coming. This is an improvement on fried snails which were just beginning to appear on the menus ! They were the giant variety, which had become an absolute pest in Malaya of recent years ; though there don't seem to have been such quantities here. There wouldn't be if we wanted to breed them. A long memorandum was drawn up on the subject of the proposed snail farm and read out in all the huts a few weeks ago. I wonder what the Japanese thought of it ; they see all our camp notices before circulation. Shellabeare, at one time a mighty hunter before the Lord, was to be O.C. Snails. Someone suggested it was rather a come-down after being a Game Warden and in charge of elephants in their natural habitat, but his reply was that he was not so active as he used to be, and perhaps this was more suitable

Fresh fish is coming in and a hundred eggs daily to the hospital. Hitherto, if eggs were recommended by the doctor to a patient in

hospital, the hospital couldn't supply them, so, if he could afford it, the patient used to buy them himself. The merchant princes of the Black Market might, as a concession, let a man sick in hospital, have an egg for only twelve dollars. Banana money is now practically worthless, and I hear several of the aforesaid merchant princes have been landed with a packet. Cheroots are very short, and the latest market price I have heard for these is twelve dollars each, and business has been done in eggs at one hundred and twenty dollars each.

We all sent off a postcard to-day—the first in which we could really say anything. We hope they will go, but so far there has been no sign of any of our people yet. We were also given a form to fill in asking whether we would like to fly home ; if so, when ? Immediately, if not sooner, please !

There was a long meeting this afternoon between Collinge, Miss Hegarty, General Saito, Sweitzer, another Swiss and two Japanese officers. A report of this was circulated during the evening, and I gather our troops are not expected for another six to ten days. There is talk of our being transferred to Raffles and Sea View Hotels, and the adjoining flats, but the only move in which I am interested is the one which will take me on board a 'plane or a ship. Sweitzer is now officially recognised by Tokyo as the Representative of the International Red Cross, but so far he has not been allowed to walk through the camp and see the conditions under which we are living. It was also disclosed that there are more parcels to come in. The Japanese excuse for their non-delivery was that they were intended for Burma and Sumatra.

August 28th.—The cheese duly arrived, and we got a pound each : Australian Kraft in tins. A bit ancient, but very welcome ; old army stocks, I should think. There had been similar odd tins of this on sale in the camp for some time at four hundred dollars each. Australian bully, whole cases of it, have also been obtainable in the Black Market lately, and these were supposed to be bulk Red Cross supplies from Australia. However, the Japanese kindly retailed them to us through the Jews ; but unless you were a millionaire it wasn't much use. A lot of flour had been received from Australia as well, but all we ever saw of this was on lorries driving past the camp.

Some 'planes flew over to-day—Liberators, I think. The first arrived at mid-day and flew over, singly, at about a hundred feet. They dropped leaflets in Japanese, which told our guards to look after us well. Other 'planes dropped more leaflets at about five o'clock, but these were in English, Chinese, Malay, Tamil, etc., and said that we should behave quietly and obey orders and that food was on its way, and that we would be collected in due course.

People with friends outside are receiving parcels from them ; some of the contents being sold—or rather, offered, as there are not many buyers. For instance two lbs. of honey was offered at ten dollars Straits, or three hundred banana. Collinge asked Sweitzer if he might hire a lorry. The answer was that the cost would be somewhat prohibitive—25,000 dollars a day.

August 30th.—A wireless set has been brought in, so we have received the B.B.C. news officially for the first time. Two R.A.M.C. doctors and two officers from the Parachute Regiment dropped on Changi aerodrome yesterday. They had left Colombo at 8 p.m. the day before, and arrived about dawn. They came here in the afternoon, and put the wind up the Sikh guards so badly, that one of them bolted for Singapore and is said to be still running. Our troops are reported to be arriving in four or five days.

More parcels have arrived. Food seems adequate, but the camp fare seems to be getting worse. Perhaps it is because we are no longer hungry, but I don't think that it is altogether that. I think the kitchen idea is to supply more plain rice for us to eat with the tinned stuff we get from the parcels ; but, unfortunately the stuff from the parcels doesn't go so very far. To-day's menu is : Breakfast—kungi ; Dinner—rice, fish and veg. soup ; Tea—rice and potato loaf—not very exciting eating. I had Fergus to tea on his birthday, August 27th, and I gave him biscuits, butter and cheese—five hundred dollars' worth at one fell swoop : the most expensive party I've ever given ! But then, for some time, though we were still solemnly handed over our pay each month, calculated at the rate of forty cents per working day, a hundred dollar bill was almost the lowest form of legal tender. We heard that at the gambling houses outside, a man would never count his money. He would measure off so many inches from a high pile of hundred dollar bills beside him. There was also a tale of a Japanese going round to pay his labour force and taking his own printing machine with him.

September 1st.—A newspaper, S.E.A.C., which stands for South Eastern Asia Command, was dropped to-day and copies circulated. It was a specially printed edition for Internees and P.O.W.s, and contained a complete diary of the major events of the war and a resumé of happenings in the outside world since the capitulation of Singapore. It was extremely interesting.

September 2nd.—Japan signed on the dotted line this morning and a broadcast of the proceedings was received in the camp. We are free now—though you wouldn't notice it. Several people have been breaking camp and visiting Singapore, but the newly-arrived C.O. says this practice must cease. For one thing, so he says, the Japanese are still in charge and are responsible for us. The reason

why we must not break camp is that we don't want to get ourselves involved in any little bother that is going on outside, and the Chinese are fairly busy bumping off undesirables. They always said they would; and quite early in Changi, we heard they had sent in a request that they would like forty-eight hours between the Japanese getting out and the British taking over in which to square a few accounts—and they have a few to settle too! Thousands of Chinese were just collected off the streets when the Japanese took over and loaded into lorries and taken out and shot. And these, I suppose, might be considered the lucky ones. This request of the Chinese is just another proof of their loyalty and faith in our final victory. As regards some of the bastards who have been in charge of us, I'm told Tominaga and "Puss-in-Boots" are under arrest and some thirty or forty charges are being preferred against them. The Chinese have also opened a fund for buying stuff for this camp. In spite of an announcement that food supplies are now adequate, we have not seen much sign of it. We did get two and a half pounds of Cold Storage Butter each to-day, but it was rather *embarras de richesse*: It was nice and hard when we got it, but how to store it, that was the problem. Incidentally, butter is supposed to be one of those things which we should take in moderation on account of our disorganised stomachs. So far I have felt no inconvenience; and I've been eating dollops of it with everything—kungi, rice, soup and bun.

September 3rd.—The sixth anniversary of Britain's entry into the war. The Union Jack was hoisted over the camp to-day at noon. It was run up by Lady Thomas. But, to my mind, the ceremony lacked dignity. It was a home-made flag, but I am not criticising that. But I do not think it is quite in keeping to call for a "Tiger" after three cheers have been given for the King. It smacks too much of a rugger dinner. "Land of Hope and Glory" was sung; but that wasn't enough—"There'll Always Be An England" was tacked on, which after all, isn't much more than a music hall ditty. There was a Thanksgiving Service this morning, too.

Two destroyers, *Cleopatra* and *Bengal*, came into Singapore to-day, and the cruiser, *Sussex*, is expected to-morrow. We hope to be away within a week, though it seems likely we may be hung up in India or Ceylon for refitting and trans-shipment. I don't think it likely many of us will fly.

September 6th.—Lady Louis Mountbatten arrived in Singapore to-day, by air, and troops landed yesterday. We have seen nothing of them yet. The ban on our leaving camp has been removed and many people hitch-hiked into the town. An inferior brand of cigarettes is fairly plentiful now, which is a pleasant change after the cheroots we have been smoking; to say nothing of the

home-made mixtures made from papaya leaf, tapioca leaf, tea and what not.

September 7th.—The camp reverted to Singapore time to-day. A lot of P.O.W's, mostly members of the F.M.S.V.F., came in to look up friends.

We also heard that the attack on Malaya was scheduled for this month, and that the Japanese had informed our High Command that, in the event of an attack, all P.O.Ws and internees would be bumped off. Pleasant people! Singapore was to be defended to the last, and, as during 1942, the final stages of the battle would be fought in and around this camp. In Manilla, we hear, the Japanese used the prisoners of war as a shield, and no doubt, the same thing would have happened here had our troops allowed it. By that I mean that our plan was for the Guerillas, of which there were some five thousand on the mainland and had been for some time, to rush the Japanese guards and bump them off, what time thousands of paratroops would be landed all around the camps to rush us out. There was another "pleasant" story, also from Manilla, that there, some of the prisoners had been driven into tunnels by the Japanese, when petrol had been poured in and ignited. Have we found out at last the purpose of the tunnels?

The Band of the Royal Marines beat the Retreat this evening. A thrilling and stirring sight; they marched in in style with the Drum Major at their head. And, talking of the Navy, the bakers from *H.M.S. Sussex* baked bread for the whole camp to-day. Think of it! Half-a-pound of real bread each—the first since the fall of Singapore. Two stories, worthy of inclusion, brought back from the *Sussex* by two men who had tea there. The first: they overheard one N.O. say to another: "Have you seen any of these internees yet?" 2nd N.O.: "Yes." 1st N.O.: "What are they like. Pretty run down, I suppose?" 2nd N.O.: "Oh, not so bad. But mentally! It'll take them years to get back to normal!" And the second was of the Commander who asked his Marine servant what he thought England would be like after the war. The answer was: "Well, I dunno, Sir, what with these pre-fabricated houses and pre-fornicated wives . . . . !"

September 8th.—Took a stroll outside to-day. Saw some of the newly arrived Canteen Ladies looking so fresh and clean and smart. Nothing much else of interest. We have a Ghurka guard now; very ferocious looking, armed with tommy guns. All kinds of ex-Malayans are turning up again in various administrative jobs and covered in red tabs and crowns and things. They have jobs with the newly-formed British Military Administration.

They were immediately dubbed " Banana Colonels " by some unregenerate internee, as distinct from the genuine article.

We are now in the hands of the Repatriation of Allied Prisoners of War and Internees organisation, or R.A.P.W.I. for short. We think, however, that the letters stand for Retention of All Prisoners of War Indefinitely. One hundred hospital cases leave to-morrow, and a further hundred and twenty on Monday. I am told they hope to clear everyone out, P.O.W.s and internees, in three weeks—32,000 in all. So far there are about eighty ships in the harbour, but I expect a lot are carrying transport and stores.

The food was the worst for a long time to-day. R.A.P.W.I. are to feed us as from Monday, so I expect to-morrow will be a lean day too. A R.A.P.W.I. colonel is reported to have said it made him angry to see us eating rice, but he himself " only had ready cooked rations in tins." The operative word seems to be " only." Surely, one would think, some chocolate and biscuits might be sent in. The last piece of chocolate I tasted, I picked out of the " Wet Refuse " bucket, where it had been thrown by some pernicketty internee because it was going a bit green at the edges ! Still no pipe tobacco.

September 9th.—Heard on the wireless to-night that the Japanese were printing six million dollars worth of banana money a day towards the end !

September 10th.—R.A.P.W.I. rations started to-day. They seemed fairly adequate and consisted of two 2-lb. tins of salmon, three tins of peas, two of pears, two of jam, one of cheese, and four tins of milk between eight men, with twelve biscuits each and tea, sugar, salt and peanuts. Too good to be true as we are to get other stuff from our kitchens, where Chinese cooks are now installed.

Lady Louis visited the camp this morning on an informal inspection and caught us rather on the hop. Still she expressed the wish to see us as we were and she certainly did. Shirtless, shoeless and a pair of V slips in the place of shorts, which costume was considered *de rigeur* amongst us. It saves a lot of washing at any rate and it is cool.

More people left to-day ; those who weren't too fit and those for whom there wasn't room in hospital. I went to an Ensa concert in the evening with Tiny and Bill, who had been my stable companions for the last three and a half years. And we still speak to each other ! It was fairly third-rate, but an impersonator was quite good when we knew whom he was imitating, but new stars seem to have appeared in the Hollywood firmament.

September 11th.—S.E.A.C. is now said to stand for "Supreme Example of Absolute Confusion."

Water is shorter now than it's been for months. Part of the camp has water flushed latrines and there are showers here and there. For the rest bore-holes were dug, and since the end had come, no new ones had been dug, and the old ones were just about bubbling over. No wonder visitors to the camp said they could smell it for miles. I suppose, we living in it, were used to it, and we probably stink ourselves. Or is it that "ancient and fish-like smell" of decayed prawn-paste frying to which we have grown so accustomed of an evening?

The B.B.C. have been broadcasting atrocity stories about the Japanese camps which is silly. We have listened in to them and are very angry; especially as so far no word has been sent to our people that we are all right—at least, none so far as we know. It's high time we got some mail too. Surely one 'plane could have been spared to bring us some letters from home?

September 12th.—There seems some chance that we shall get away by the 15th. Some Chinese Guerillas came through the camp looking very fit in battle dress and armed with tommy guns. The history of this part of the campaign will be well worth reading. Davis of the F.M.S. police was in it from the start. He managed to get to Ceylon in a small boat, after being left behind the Japanese lines as they advanced down the Peninsula. He was landed up country later from a submarine, and got busy organising things. Twice he went back to Ceylon by submarine. These Guerilla leaders were in touch with our people all the time by wireless.

I'm glad to learn from the papers I have seen that the atomic bomb was not the sole reason for the collapse of Japan. At least I think it was the excuse they used to "save face," and to chuck their hand in. We have had them on the run for two years and more, and I think we can say we have beaten them fairly and squarely at their own game and on their own ground, so to speak. Louis Mountbatten is due in Singapore this morning and the signing of the surrender takes place to-day. The Japanese in Singapore seem to have been kept in ignorance by Tokyo of the real state of affairs; hence one reason for all the delay that has been going on. I am told we have the Japanese hard at work cleaning up the town, and that they are being put through the hoop a bit for a change. I hear also that they are looking pretty down in the mouth. Well, it's not surprising. After all, we could and did keep cheerful, because not one among us thought for one moment that we could lose, and we had a lot to look forward to. The Japanese have nothing. But thank God it is over!

Could we have left the native to his fate ?
We could—but that was not where duty lay.
Ours to remain and not to run away,
Although we knew the Japanese were at the gate.
Ours not to seek for glory ; but to wait
And face whatever hardship must be borne.
Some suffered months of torture—some we mourn
Who died, sad victims of barbarian hate.

We chose to stay behind : for, had we not,
Could we have met the Chinese or Malay
Again on equal terms ? Each dreary day
They knew we had not run, but shared their lot.
It was but little. Now has come the end—
Proudly we answer when they call us " Friend " !

XXI.

AND that is about all. Lord Louis Mountbatten blew into the camp informally on September 13th, but I missed him as I was out in the town with a newly discovered son-in-law elect, who had popped in yesterday, complete with a bottle of whisky, to ask for the hand of my elder daughter. With both eyes glued to the said b. I gladly consented. He was a member of an Air Borne Division which had landed at Morib the day before, and he had stepped on to a passing Jeep and come on to Singapore post haste, to ask my blessing.

The next day was spent in packing up and drawing a little supplementary kit, for we were really to be off on the fifteenth, in the *Tagelberg*, sailing direct for the U.K. Then, at what might be called the eleventh hour, but it was really nine at night, the much longed for mail from home arrived. What a joy it was to have really recent news of those at home ; but the letters only just reached us in time, for we were off at dawn the next morning.

THE END.

INTERVAL, here while I change the record. These verses have no connection with what has gone before or with what follows, except that I wrote them in Changi. I throw them in for make-weight.

TELOK KEMANG — PORT DICKSON.

Around the crescent of the palm-fring'd bay,
The red sands stretch : by headland may be seen
Tall trees reflected, green in deeper green :
And, at the water's edge, the ripples play,
Each breaking in a silvery cascade.
Stirred by the breeze, the casurinas sway
To their own music : all the sea is gay
And glitters with an opalescent jade.

Then comes cool evening and the skies assume
The tints of flowers : there, in the glow, one sees
Blue jacaranda, flame of tulip trees,
Gold alamanda, red hibiscus bloom :
Cicadas call : sweet moonflowers scent the breeze,
And fireflies flicker in the fading gloom.

— o —

SUSSEX.

A windswept land is green with rolling hills,
Where white cliffs merge into the shimm'ring sea :
And golden king-cups, blowing on the lea,
Begild the fringes of the woodland rills.
The hedges, white with may : the droning hum
Of bees among the scented blossom fills
The air : on high the winging skylark trills
His joyous song which tells that Spring is come.

Hush'd are the woods once purple with foxglove,
And trees are gaunt against the wintry sky.
Mourn not for me when my day comes to die :
Let me rest there with but green grass above :
I shall be happy, ever, if I lie
In Sussex, high amid the Downs I love.

— o —

CHANCTONBURY.

A beech copse on his brow is set,
The russet leaves with gold inlaid :
And wild flowers peep : beneath its shade,
Anemone and violet :
A fitting coronet that crowns
This noble King of Sussex Downs.

Since Time began the wind's blown free
Across the ridge : the Summer sun
Has watched the sparkling Adur run
Through flower-deck'd meadows to the sea ;
And wisps of curling smoke reveal'd
The wooded hamlets of the Weald.

The springy turf I fain would tread
And see the Downs stretch East and West ;
In quilt-like colours they are dress'd
With yellow mustard, poppies red,
White chalk and ploughland, earthy brown,
But green's the glory of the Down.

Here, by the silent dew-fill'd pool,
The sad sheep crop the downland grass ;
At eventide the cattle pass
To slake their thirst with water cool ;
The shadows lengthen on the hill
When daylight dies, and all is still.

This downland track the Druid trod,
And Caesar's Legions ; Saxon churl ;
Rude Viking and the Norman Earl ;
But now they lie beneath the sod.
Though they are dead, the beech still crowns
This peerless Monarch of the Downs.

— o —

There is no pleasure here : no Spring—
Each hour is like the one that's past.
We only know there'll come at last
The day of Freedom. Everything
Will seem to blossom : and we'll see
Those seasons now a memory.

The hedgerows are all tipp'd with green ;
The gardens gay with daffodils ;
The fragrance of the lilac fills
The air, and mingles with jasmine ;
Laburnum drips with golden rain ;
The cuckoo calls ; Spring's here again.

In Summer time bright butterflies
Caress each dewy petal tip ;
And bees the honey'd sweetness sip
While droning drowsy lullabies ;
Soft peaches blush upon the wall,
But roses are the best of all.

The moors lie hid in purple flood
Of heather ; and through summer haze,
The hills with gorse are all ablaze ;
And poppies dye the corn with blood ;
In woods the honeysuckles twine
And add their scent to scent of pine.

With Autumn comes the harvest, and
In swathes is laid the ripen'd corn ;
Red hips and haws the woods adorn ;
Weighed down with fruit the orchards stand ;
Plums, rosy apples, yellow pears,
But sober tints the forest wears.

A mantle cold when Winter comes
Enshrouds the lonely countryside
With snow and hoarfrost : but, beside
The cottage, bloom chrysanthemums :
And soon the cherry trees will know
A softer and a sweeter snow.

There is no pleasure here but dreams ;
And soon may all these dreams come true !
Then we shall taste the joy anew
Of Freedom. Even now it seems
The buds are ready on the tree
To blossom as they welcome me.

— o —

PART TWO

The Doggerel which follows formed part of the original Interlude :

And if, perchance, these rhymes offend,
Please persevere until the end :
For in the last of this anthology
I make a somewhat slight apology.
I sign myself—although I'm not—
" Yours humbly, James Guy Heriot ! "

There was a time when I would choose
My food : and cooks I'd take on.
I had my own particular views
On frying eggs and bacon.

But now boiled mutton I'd not waste,
With onion sauce or caper :
But prunes I get ; which seem to taste
Of train oil and brown paper.

Some oysters followed by a bird
Is meat for lads and lasses.
To say we " like " our food's absurd—
Thin hogwash *cum* molasses.

I'd like a bot. of Bollinger !
What year ? Oh Hell ! I'd risk it.
I take my little porringer
And queue for marg : and biscuit.

If I don't eat I'll go to waste :
I can no longer grapple.
I almost like my salt-fish paste—
I love my plum and apple !

— o —

Now some people scrawl
On a lavatory wall
Rude words and designs anatomical.
Though never refined
They amuse the small mind
Of the halfwit who thinks dirt is comical.

But outside Block " D."
Should you come down to see,
Stands the building whose merits I'm urging—
" Aston Villa," Latrine,
Five-seater, spot-clean,
Whose walls are unsullied and virgin.

— o —

READERS' DIGEST.

Some people show a nice taste—
Read good books through and through :
And with those bound with rice paste,
Devour both covers too !

— o —

Now some have constipation
And some of us are loose :
We've day and night starvation ;
There's no need to reduce.
We're children of a tough age,
We diet not " comme Hay,"
We lack sufficient roughage
We do our stuff each day.

With calories deficient
And lacking vitamines,
Our strength is insufficient
For digging deep latrines.
To make our lives seem brisker
And keep us on our corn,
Some bloke talks through his whisker
And a new rumour's born.

We queue up for our dinner,
For kungi and for bun :
We queue to pick the winner
In the sweepstake—oh what fun !
We queue to wash the torso ;
The Libr'ry queue is full ;
The Barber's one is more so,
As is the " Push and Pull."

For games we throw a quoit or
Play cricket in the heat ;
While others merely loiter
Where passages all meet.
And therefore, as the circs. are,
With bellies barely full,
We think that P.T. jerks are
Another line of " bull."

— o —

CONFESSION.

The plea for purity may impede
The pen of some contributors—
At times I find I can't accede,
And so I'm one it snooters.

" A dirty mind's a perpetual feast "
I find an apt quotation :
So I feel confident at least
I shan't die of starvation.

— o —

I once was quite a respectable planter,
Doing my job, but always hoping
Fate would be kind and eventually grant a
Chance of retirement in ease and toping.
I didn't believe in mopping or moping,
So every night I took my " pahit "*
Refraining from other exotic doping—
A character upright ; well, slightly sloping.

I held no brief for Rubber Researchants
Nor was I quite what you might term a
Adherent of those " bullish " merchants,
Shooting my neck about " Ganoderma."†
My notions left many a V.A., a squirmer ;
I'd let them soak and so he'd smoke
My heretical dogma in his " Burma "—
Sometimes he took them without a murmur.

I couldn't be rated as a sinner ;
I went to the Races and sometimes backed a
Horse duly scheduled for a winner
(Getting the tip from my Contractor).
He'd also see that I seldom lacked a
Case or two to see me through—
But this doesn't make me a malefactor,
Though possibly I had the odd detractor.

I lived quite well and would sometimes toff it,
(No small perquisite disdaining)
I didn't use all of the Toddy Profit ;
Enough for body and soul sustaining.
From paying bills I kept refraining ;
So I do not quail at being in jail—
It might have been sooner, so I'm not complaining,
Nor am I wasting breath profaning.

I've given up drink and golf on Sundays
For " Firewood Fatigue " and swill tub wheeling.
My life is as dour as Mrs. Grundy's—
Though what I think of it, I'm concealing.
I'm hot and strong for " commonwealing " ;
I gather beans and dig latrines,
And a penchant for rice I am revealing—
Though nothing quite conquers that sinking feeling.

*" *Pahit," in Malay, means "bitter" : therefore, colloquially, " a short snort."*

† *A disease of rubber.*

— o —

TREES.

There was a time I never knew
That I should miss the so-called " view " :
Tree after tree in vistaed glade,
Each with a cup and spout array'd
Stretching as far as I could see—
But *then* I damned the rubber tree.

O tree who often seemed to wear
A nest of hornets in her hair !
Ah, many times have I been stung
When, from your branches far out-flung,
There has descended angry bee—
How then I cursed the rubber tree !

I never knew that I should miss
Hevea Brasiliensis.
In Changi now I long to see
A shapely, verdant rubber tree.
Dear God ! I wish, I wish I could—
But all I see is just fire-wood.

— o —

RED PALM IN THE MORNING.

Red oil in the morning
Is waiting for you ;
If you don't want your portion,
You know what to do.

But lap it up nicely,
Though it may appal :
You'd get Brimstone and Treacle
At Dotheboys' Hall.

Mild laxative action,
So some will not stay ;
But what you retain is
Pure Vitamin A.

It cleans up your Scabies,
Pellagra and Sprue :
Red Palm in the morning
Is waiting for you.

— o —

Out from the burning Afric' sand,
Hot as the pit's inmost retreats,
Came Guavite, soup, etc., and
Anhydrous non-scorbutic sweets.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
Share one share all has been the pledge :
And scarcely ever comes the chance
Of sequestrating " Meat & Veg."

Came jams ! Such jams ! Of breeds unknown :
Some gamboge, some incarnadine ;
And one whole pound is all my own—
It may be bloody, but it's MINE !

No matter though I scoff the lot
At one fell swoop ? No ! Not a damn !
I am the master of the pot :
I am the captain of my jam !

— o —

REQUIEM.

How I loathe a diet which is
Mainly Kungi, Rice and Spinach !
How I wish that I was fitter !
(How I miss my glass of Bitter !)
All I get is stinking fish.
If I don't soon get my wish—
Just a bite of beef and pickle—
I shall fall before Death's sickle :
My grey hairs with sorrow brought
To the crematorial port.

Joyfully then strew my ashes !
Dance ! while brazen cymbal clashes !
I, on high, when I am thither,
Will accompany on my zither.
Phoenix-like I shall have risen,
Cleaving from the earthly prison.
My condition free from sin is :
Here I'll quaff my stoup of Guinness,
Safe ensconced 'mid Heavenly Cloisters
Toying with angelic oysters !

— o —

KNEES UPWARD — BEND!

Under the shade of Changi Gaol
The bearded beauty stands,
Inhaling deeply through his nose
What time his chest expands,
Hiding his shrivelled person
Behind his palsied hands.

He stands there, stone-stark naked,
Quite unabashed—not coy.
Hoping to raise an appetite
These antics he'll employ,
To fill his flapping stomach
With kungi and with joy.

He does his daily dozen ;
He stretches and he bends.
He wiggles toes and fingers,
And other odds and ends ;
And does things with his navel
That Sandow recommends.

He don't improve the prospect—
Knees up and arms out-flung ;
Gasping and very breathless,
And missing on one lung—
If unwept and unhonoured,
He'll perish not unsung.

This prospect never pleases.
Not only is *he* vile—
Why don't such hirsutes realise
That beards don't suit their style ?
Perhaps their times not wasted—
They've given us a smile.

— o —

Noon-time is time for resting,
So people often say.
The contrary I'm testing,
Hark to the din to-day !
Yells from the yard grow frenzied ;
Inside, the snores a crime—
And, in my dreams, or so it seems,
Any time's banging time !

— o —

I know a bank whose genesis
Was bore-hole excavation :
Begotten by the M.C.S. ;*
Achieved in execration.

I know a bank where crotons grow,
Where scarce a bee or wopse is—
For such shrubs lack the honey'd flow
Of rose or coreopsis.

I know a bank within these walls,
Where blossoms dare not weaken
Whereon the water nightly falls,
Thrice blessed by the Archdeacon.

I know a bank where orchids flower
Arranged in neat expedience,
Which have transformed into a bower
The Gentlemen's Convenience.

— o —

The Medical Reference Committee sat in solemn conclave,
Their brows were furrowed and wrinkled ; their faces long-drawn and grave ;
They argued about Carbo-hydrates, Proteins and Vitamins,
And evolved a long Memorandum, which in words of two syllables means :—
Eat up all your kungi—it's so good for you.
Shovel down that sardine : Lap up your veg. stew !
Wallow in Red Palm Oil—gollop it with zest !
And don't forget that Spinach will put hair upon your chest !

It's essential to stomach your breakfast—a half-pint of kungi or more.
If you can't, bake it up into biscuits (with some rice-flour boned from the store).
Your tiffin you mustn't turn down—whether bully or scaly fish fin ;
If you *must* bring it up again later—well, see it goes in the " Wet " bin !
Drink up all your lime juice and the so-called tea ;
Eat your roasted pea-nuts and your " kedgeree " ;
Masticate your rice-cake—but, at end of day,
You may draw all your rice pudding : and throw the muck away !

**Malayan Civil Service.*

MATERIA MEDICA.

Some say we're fitter now we're gaoled,
No D.T.s : less Neurosis ;
Our livers too are non-hobnailed
And free from all Cirrhosis.

We wallow in all Vitamines ;
In fact, the more the merrier ;
And thanks to our assorted greens,
We are less Beri-berier.

They paint the sick with varied hues
So you can surely spot 'em :
They rival, with their reds and blues,
A full-grown mandrill's bottom.

To staying put we are inured ;
We might feel worse and though,
No Singapore Foot can be cured,
They heal Syonan* Toe.

But no beer, no blondes, no brunettes,
Our pleasure here reduces ;
Though my imagination whets
My erstwhile gastric juices.

I'd dine a blonde out at the Cri :
A brunette at Quaglino's—
And soothe the system, by and by,
With Aspirin and Eno's.

And what if I saw crimson mice ?
A poor heart never roisters—
I could but follow Jeeves' advice
And take two Prairie Oysters !

**Syonan To was the Japanese name for Singapore.*

— o —

STRIP TEASE.

Much indignity have I stood :
How much, I can't quite determine.
Oft, for the communal good,
Doctors probe my bod. for vermin.
Does this make me blush all over ?
No ! For in my heart of hearts,
Living in communal clover
I know I've no private parts.

— o —

ST. VALENTINE.

O Phyllis, on this day of days,
Dan Cupid cuts a caper :
Fain would I pen lines in her praise
On best cream-woven paper.

I would express in loving phrase
How in my arms I'd clasp her—
Alas ! My vellum is but " Jeyes,"
And that enfolds my gasper.

— o —

EASTER.

At Eastertide the custom begs
That I should cry it loud with eggs,
Fluff' chicks or chocolate rabbits :
But times are changed and I can't buy
An egg, whenever I may try,
So I must change my habits.

The price of eggs is somewhat high—
And so are they—and therefore I
Know I may court disaster.
For, if it's good, she'll get proteins :
But it's marked " R.Q.M." which means,
" Refer to Quarter Master."

To let my Phyl know how I feel
I'd dye her egg with cochineal
So to relieve the tedium.
But since we are so far from home,
I needs must use Mercurichrome—
I have no other medium.

— o —

EXPRESSION.

Ye Coconut Expressers !
Who scrape and press and squeeze ;
Whose efforts render palatable
Our breakfasts and our teas !
Thanks solely to your gumption
Our kungi is all but
Fit for human consumption
Through grated coconut !

— o —

CHRISTMAS.

At Christmas I was wont to shower
Upon my Phyllis many a flower,
Perfume or frilly-frilly.
But now, due to my straitened means,
I can but say it with sardines,
Or just a spray of Chili.

I used to send her *billets doux*,
Of Fullers' chocies, not a few,
And laud her in sonata.
But since we're both in this Bastille,
My loving feelings I reveal
With sausage (Chipolata).

— o —

CAMP POLICE.

A policeman's lot was ne'er a happy one ;
Now on his beat there is no beer or beauty,
And first among those things which are not done,
Is reading during tedious spells of duty.

In vain on duty now fresh hints to seek
From Wallace, King of all the crime purveyors :
In vain to strive to polish his technique
With tips from Christie, hints from D. L. Sayers.

Yes, he must leave his thriller or his mystery ;
No books his actions are allowed to trammel—
No Poetry, Prose, Play, Novel, History
Or Classic—such as " Laura Was My Camel."

— o —

" THE WATER CLOSETS ARE RESERVED FOR THE AGED AND INFIRM."

Assist the sick ; respect grey hair ;
And with due deference treat them—
In Changi, though not standing there,
On pedestals we seat them.

— o —

CAUTIONARY TALE—after Hilaire Belloc.

The Dreadful Story of Two Common Internees, who kicked up Hell, and were let off Far Too Lightly.

It is a sad tale I relate
And which concerns the doleful fate
Of all unruly internees
Who think they can do as they please.
I'm sorry there are some like this,
But they are *sui generis* ;
All others hoe the common row
Entirely *pro bo' publico.*
But, as I said, there are a score
Of those who've been " inside " before ;
Or those the police may have had taped,
But by skulldudgery escaped.

Among this unregenerate crew
I will, at random, mention two ;
Whom we, for want of better names,
The one will dub, just simply, " James,"
Merely a common internee.
The other, as he claimed to be
Out of a very different drawer,
Thinking he had that " something more,"
We'll say he signed himself, " Yours truly,
St. John Fitz-Belvoir Beauchamps-Beaulieu,"
Because he liked to think that he
Sprang from the Aristocracy.
If this were true, as you and I know,
He could be nothing but a by-blow.
Take notice and cast no aspersions—
I am not dealing with real persons.

No end of trouble would they give
To their Floor Representative :
They'd organise cabals, intrigues,
And play him up about fatigues,
And seldom ever would they fail
To put " wet " stuff in the " dry " pail.
They wouldn't eat their extra greens ;
They carried books to the latrines,
And even put the pages to
The basest use that man can do ;
Or use a newspaper where one
Or two small sheets might well have done.

The notice on the subject's plain—
Big sheets block up the outlet drain.
So to ignore it is quite petty :
And though one cannot use confetti,
One can at least the sizes fix
To something nearer eight by six.

Now after ten, when lights are out,
They'd kick up Hell's Delight and shout
And clump about in heavy boots,
Saying they didn't give two hoots
For the complaints and even grouches
Of those who'd sought their virtuous couches.
No use, was it, to cry, " Quiet Please ! "
To two such scallywags as these.
When threatened with arrest, they'd say,
" What ! Tell the Police ! Why, who are they ?
We're not afraid of them, that's flat "—
Then snap their fingers, just like that !
To show how much they meant they cared
And just how little they were scared.
Alas ! Pride comes before a cropper,
And, glory be, there was one copper,
To put it crudely, full of guts,
Determined to run in these mutts.
For, one day, his path will impinge on
This James and his accomplice, St. John.

He found them Kicking Up A Stink
And straightway threatened them with clink.
But, thinking they'd the Police Force mastered,
They hailed the cop as " B———y B———d ! "
Just only so much can I print,
As for the rest, I dare not hint,
Though it was quite explicit too
Just what they wanted him to do !
Still, proving he was at no loss, he
Disappeared and called a posse
Of Camp Police to make arrest,
While murmuring, " Discretion's best.
Put these men right inside the cooler ;
I'll soon teach them who's the ruler !
I am the cock of this here dung-heap !
Now only let me hear one cheep,
And I will have you gagged and bound
In some dank dungeon underground.

There'll be no " standard " food for you—
No parenthetical beef stew—
But bread and water yours instead :
That is, if I can get the bread."

You'd think that they would catch it hot—
Six of the best on the old spot :
For our Beaks, with sadistic mind,
Approved of baring the behind
Of anyone, whatever station,
They thought required a castigation.
But when they came before the Board,
The Chairman merely hummed and hawed
And said, " You're better on your own ;
You'll spend the next six weeks alone."
So all this hu-ha to these swine meant
Three weeks' solitary confinement ;
Three blessed weeks to be allowed
To live far from the madding crowd !

And, looking down these squalid rows
I think, " The lucky so and so's ! "

— o —

THE POET'S LOT.

When the poet finds himself incarcerated
In Changi's super ferro-concrete gaol,
His Muse may call, but he's exasperated
And racks his brains for rhymes without avail.
And when the gates close on him with a clang, he
Sits a-moping in his crowded cell,
And finds it hard to get a rhyme for Changi,
And other operative words as well.

It too is pretty hard upon a poet
To throw a rhyme for Kungi off his chest.
But, as the time goes on, no doubt he'll know it
Is no use, and give his mind a rest.
And life is not regarded as much fun—Je-
Hoshaphat ! He looks on it as hell !
Subsisting just on Spinach and on Kungi,
And other unattractive food as well.

When he gets out, unless I'm much mistaken,
He'll look for themes far different to these ;
Ballads on Beer and Odes to Eggs and Bacon,
And spread himself on Butter, Bread and Cheese.
He'd love to write a Sonnet to a Sausage,
Expatiating on its savoury smell :
But here, in this embittered, somewhat cross age,
He's found another rhymeless word as well !

— o —

THE DOG WATCH.

And, since by dogs this prison is anointed
(For no dog his opinion of it stifles)
So daily one dog's owner is appointed
To deal with any unconsidered trifles.

— o —

DE PROFUNDIS.

Time was when work and I were well acquainted
As, after muster, through the fields I'd roam,
Thinking the " Glorious East " was over painted
When thus described, in journalese, at home.
Perhaps one reason people thought it so enchanting
Was just that whisky cost one dollar ten ;
And so, our elders found it worth while planting—
Ah me ! I was a pale young creeper then.

Day after day I'd trudge round the Division,
Airing such little Tamil as I'd got ;
Watching for wounds and checking bark excision,
Doctoring Black Stripe or doping Mouldy Rot.
Weighing in crop at the receiving centre ;
Back to the field for weeding, lastly, when
Home in my bungalow, check roll names I'd enter—
Ah me ! I was a red-faced S.D.* then.

Then came new ways of coping with our Fomes :
Poor soils to ginger up we'd vainly strive :
Finding our once much vaunted loam is
Deficient in N and no $P_2 O_5$.
Though nothing cured the factory drain's aroma,
Science was applied to all within our ken ;
And so I got my I.S.P. Diploma—
Ah me ! I was an embryo P.D.† then.

*S.D. — *Sinna Dorai — Assistant* (*Little Master*).
†P.D. — *Peria Dorai — Manager* (*Big Master*).

I prospered in the land of my adoption.
On good things, got in on the ground floor ;
(I once put through a slighty shady option)
My balance in the bank grew more and more.
And then retirement loomed on the horizon ;
I dwelt in towns, nor laboured every day ;
No open neck, but unaccustomed ties on—
Ah me ! I had arrived ; the Big V.A.

I thought I was due peace and rest from labour—
My cell mates each, I designate as, " Oaf."
I load up firewood, big as any caber,
With no " Fatigue Tea " or an extra loaf.
I'm on the dole, with four bucks monthly credit ;
Four Dollars ! When I think what I have earned !
It's what ? It's Bloody—now I've said it—
Ah me ! I'm here in Changi and interned !

— o —

THE DAY'S WORK.

In happier days when I was free
A day at the Races was nothing to me :
After which at the " Dog " I would be seen
Lustily pulling the Fruit Machine.

With a stengah* or so and a couple of pahits,
I'd toddle along to the gay bright lights :
And after some food, I'd probably chance a
Book of coupons on a Taxi-Dancer.

All through the week I'd never fail
To do *some* work (with a b and g-ale) ;
At times, for a change, perhaps I'd stay, Sir,
For a long week end at Bukit Fraser.

So naturally here in durance vile,
All heavy fatigues just suited my style ;
And I'd soon qualified as a " double bunner "
When I got a job as Q.M.'s runner.

But, alas, like Job, I developed boils
Which the M.O. anointed with soothing oils :
And so, now a sadder man and wiser,
I became but a Locker-Sterilizer.

*" *Stengah," in Malay, means " half " : in common or garden English, a small whisky and soda.*

I soon lost all my vim and vigour
And it took quite a toll upon my figure,
And daily I grew more svelte and leaner,
Till I sank to the status of a Sub-Drain Cleaner.

But came a day when I had to shirk,
My favourite employment of watching work ;
My progress around was more halting and gropier—
I'd become inflicted with Amblyopia.

My lot was hard : I had to fight
Twixt a craving to smoke and desire for Marmite ;
And if I recover I feel I'm slipping.
Back to the drains, or even Hedge Clipping.

I rested so long that I thought it expedient,
Only to work when I found it convenient.
In the Fatigue Bloke's eye is a nasty glitter,
When he tells me he's glad I'm so much fitter.

But no I've discovered the best of evasions
Is to keep up the tale of Minor Abrasions :
Then ho for the Doctor ! who has to treat it—
Whereby I get both my cake and eat it.

— o —

LEISURE HOURS.

It's time that I touched upon Leisure,
What we do when the day's work is done :
A man cannot live with no pleasure
And must have the odd spot of fun.
Yes, " nec semper whatsit Apollo "
The classical pundit will say :
I'll translate (in case you don't follow)
" We don't empty swill every day."

There's Badminton, Hockey and Cricket,
And Tennis too, in the Main Yard.
For these you must have a " Pink Ticket,"
As to light fatigue men they are barred.
At Chess perhaps you may harbour a
Wish the ladder's top rung to earn ;
Or at Bridge you may bid à la Yarborough,
Culbertson, Simplex or Stern.

We have concerts and extravaganzas,
Orchestral, vocal or plain ;
Recitals of Shakespearean stanzas
And plays like " The Wind And The Rain."
There are talks upon people and rabbits,
Ships, sealing wax, cabbages, kings :
Debates on polygamous habits,
Or that Whisky no happiness brings.

Then, run by the more intellectual,
A Symposium, yclept, " Question Hour."
" Is Birth Control Quite Ineffectual " ?
Or " Do Thunder Storms turn the Milk Sour ?"
On earthquakes and on circumcision—
O'er many a theme do they range—
What effect has cheap Shag on the vision ?
But they keep very quiet on " Exchange " !

Should you go to the Magic Circle
Then quickness of hand will deceive ;
Where an imperceptible jerk'll
Bring Marmite or Milk from a sleeve.
If it's books, join the Library party ;
There's many a tome that will please,
Then *otium cum dignitate*,
Put your feet up and read at your ease.

— o —

DIETETICS.

What a Shilly-Shally is
Made of Food Analysis !

What if all these Loathsome Greens
Are chockful of Vitamines ?
Percentages of Sugars, Fat—
Who would give two hoots for that ?

And these Blinkin' Calories !
Better bread with jam or cheese.
Carbo-hydrates win faint praise,
Unless dished up as Mayonnaise.

Onions and a fillet steak
May induce a stomach ache ;
Such a pain can be made easier
With a dollop of Magnesia.

But, Oh for a meal—with a few potations—
And to Hell with these Chemical Equations !

— o —

BIRTHDAY.

Phyllis mine it would be pleasant,
On this day to send a present ;
So I'll strive to do my stuff—
Please accept this Curry Puff !

Maybe we'll meet at the Grille
If I'm there to empty swill :
And you'll watch, with eyes admiring,
Your poor Strephon tukang-ayering.*

When we're free, dear, let's get gay.
Cocktails, lunch, *chez* Prunier :
Tea, I think, with Rumpelmayer
And all the eclairs you desire.

Later at the Berkeley Grill,
We will eat and drink our fill :
When this day will be, God wot—
But we'll finish up *chez* Scott.

— o —

MURDERS.

You may have noticed one or two men missing from their Blocks :
I thought I'd better mention it and prepare you for some shocks.
For instance there's a chappie who, like me, wants extra grub ;
And he always seems to get it and leave me the empty tub.

I murdered him last Tuesday—merely a routine affair ;
I tipped him in the Kungi Tong while no one else was there.
He bubbled gently for a while and then he sank from view—
Next day you may have noticed extra Protein in your stew.

There's a man who in the morning has his bath along side me.
A fussy, snooty devil and morose to a degree.
If a drop of water ricochets from my body on to his,
He cries : " Hi ! Who're you washing ! " Wet as wet although he is.

* *Tukang Ayer—Water Carrier ; a sort of Domestic " Dan " in the " Pre-Waterborne Sewage Era.'*

So I slew him in the Laundry—he hadn't got a hope.
I chucked him in a concrete tank and filled his mouth with soap.
He came up the prescribed three times, but then appeared to tire,
So I fished him out and wrung him out and popped him in the drier.

Then one of these officials who would put me on fatigue,
A little guile was needed with a soupçon of intrigue ;
I lured him to the big latrine and shoved him down the drain—
So now I'm sure he is interred—I trust my meaning's plain.

A fellow notoriety who has left without much grief
Is that bloke who called me from my tea to unload sides of beef.
I argued with him gently—no methods could be kinder—
Then I cut him into segments to insert in the Rice Grinder.

You may have seen me playing Bridge, to which I'm much addicted ;
The partner, too, you may have seen, with whom I am afflicted.
He'll finesse against me no more now, my anger to provoke ;
He's gone down for the last time ; he's made his last revoke.

He mentioned that his Heart was weak and I saw he was afraid ;
I approached him with a Big Club and I finished with a Spade :
And never, never more, will his play give me the hump—
He's now amongst the Discards awaiting the Last Trump.

The chap who will keep to the left and clutter up the corridor.
And whistle fugues all down your back—too revolting, nothing horrider.
A little space is much preferred to a nasty clammy torso—
All this and Heaven too, I thought, and, damme, even more so !

A doctored coconut or two, or arsenical banana,
And now perhaps, he twangs a harp or sings a loud Hosanna !
No more you'll find him loitering in doorways, arms akimbo,
Well, R.I.P. to him—but I trust he's in the Limbo !

— o —

Under the Mercury-Vapour light
Let me play Bridge through the tropic night :
What though my chest seems chrysolite
And sea-sick green is my face !
Red once the hearts that were dealt to me ;
But now chocolate-brown they appear to be—
Though blue still the words of my *vis-a-vis*,
As I lay my trump on his Ace.

— o —

BALLADE.

CHRISTMAS: DINGLEY DELL *v.* CHANGI.

" I like a drop of something when it's good,"
The Fat Boy to Sam Weller did explain.
Then, on a codfish, sought what rest he could,
As off they lumbered down the country lane.
Arrived at Dingley Dell, it too was plain,
How to keep Christmas jovial Wardle knew,
And that that jolly person would disdain
To feed his guests on Veg. and Sardine Stew.

Yes, Christmas cheer old Wardle understood,
When Pickwick and his friends he'd entertain.
Barons of Beef and fids of Yorkshire Pudd. ;
Bumpers of Punch and hogsheads of Champagne ;
Barrels of Oysters, natives, he'd obtain,
Snapdragon, with the Brandy burning blue,
Mince Pies, Plum Pudding, Turkeys by the wain—
But not a sign of Veg. and Sardine Stew.

Up spake the Messing Chairman, " Boys, I would
That we could raise our diets to that plane.
When Christmas comes, let's try and get some food
At which the most fastidious can't complain ! "
And so the cooks went to it, might and main,
That we might have some Christmas dinner too ;
And one thing showed it was not all in vain—
There was no sign of Veg. and Sardine Stew.

Fois gras, ou Homard à l'Americain ?
Mais non—le Plum Duff et le Porc aux Choux.
Sans Crêpe Suzette, sans Potage à la Reine—
Mais aussi sans le Veg. et Sardine Stew !

— o —

SIESTA.

The Ice-Chest was full of cold bottles,
I'd a b and g-ale in each hand ;
With a book on my knees I was taking my ease,
And thinking that life was just grand.
Bees buzzed : birds exploited their throttles ;
I was fanned by a soft-blowing breeze—
Then I woke to the shout of some brazen-voiced lout
In raucous tones crying, " QUIET PLEASE ! "

— o —

THE SARDINE.

A war has many heroes
Who live and blush unseen ;
But when the war is over
Remember The Sardine.

In varied forms he's dished up—
On the " hoof " : in kedgeree ;
Curried : but on leaner days
Mixed in the Veg. I see.

Yes, he has been our stand-by
When the meat has gone astray ;
Or the Banana Gang informs us,
" Yes, we have none to-day ! "

But on one point I crave knowledge
Before I grow much older—
Though each fish seems to have a tail,
Why never head or shoulder ?

— o —

Our Garden was a loathsome thing, God wot :
Rank plot,
Poor soil,
A Blot—
One might recoil
From it : yet toil
Transformed it to a Grot
Of Spinach. So let none despoil—
God knows this Garden means
We can, at least be sure of wholesome Greens !

— o —

From the Medical standpoint
And Health point of view
It's the Depth of the Bore-Hole
That's important to you.

But when things are urgent
It's nothing to you
How deep is a Bore-Hole
But, how long is a Queue ?

— o —

Among the more unpleasant chores
Is washing shirts and breeks :
I don't know how long you wear yours,
With me it is three weeks.

Ten miles the Dhobi'd trundle
On a push bike not too posh,
And collect the weekly bundle
Of dirty clothes to wash.

In future for these menial tasks
Haggling at least must cease ;
I'll pay the Dhobi what he asks,
Per mensem or per piece.

Let's have no sloppy maundering :
It doesn't sound convincing
To say, " It's easy laundering "
And, " it's very pleasant rinsing ! "

I'm looking forward to the day
I dhobi for the last time ;
It is, whatever you may say,
An overrated pastime.

— o —

Now, as a dish, I don't find fish
Is good or appetising :
There are a few exceptions to
Encourage gourmandizing.

Before the war, how I'd abhor
Tinned sardines in tomato !
Now days are lean, the old sardine
Seems quite a good potato.

Cry " Stinking Fish ! " in sheer anguish—
It really is incredible
The amount of bone, and you must own
The rest is quite inedible.

And " Changi Paste " apart from taste,
Consistence, colour, smell,
Would be quite good if we but could
Throw it away as well !

— o —

On his bed in the prison an Internee sat,
Crying, " Willow, King Willow, King Willow "
So I said to him, " Fellow, why do you cry that,
O Willow, King Willow, King Willow ? "
" Is it home-sickness for the Oval or Lords,
Or that no second helping the Veg. Stew affords ? "
He wept and repeated again with sad chords,
" O Willow, King Willow, King Willow ! "

He mouthed and he moaned : he gibbered and cried,
" O Willow, King Willow, King Willow."
When a burst of applause was heard from outside,
(O Willow, King Willow, King Willow).
He sobbed and he sighed and he made to explain,
" It isn't the Cricket that makes me complain,
But the noise from the onlookers gives me a pain,
O Willow, King Willow, King Willow."

" I've thrown out the Bridge Fours and thought we'd have peace,
O Willow, King Willow, King Willow ;
But now I'm just waiting the happy release,
O Willow, King Willow, King Willow."
I've shouted out " Quiet ! " but what is the use ? "
Then he shoved his head into a pail of refuse—
The " Wet " one : and bubbles arose through the juice—
" O Willow, King Willow, King Willow ! "

— o —

Now " D " yard I regard as home ;
Here, shoeless, it is safe to roam,
For it is " Yeoman's Land."
In other yards sharp stones abound,
And nails and broken glass are found ;
I class them " No Man's Land."

The Yeoman, with his maul and tin,
Collects the nails : stones hammers in :
His labour never ceases.
On days when Cricketers have fun,
Prepares the pitch : and when they've done,
Packs up the popping creases.

— o —

HOME SWEET HOME.

This hell-hole always seems a-twit
With piffling tittle-tattles.
Like Betsy Trotwood here I sit
Upon my goods and chattels.
Nine inches are between each bed ;
Thirty the sleeping part is ;
And underneath are sparsely spread
My *lares et penates.*

The Main Yard's closed ; so due to that
Blokes crowd in ours and bring it
Up to the state if we'd a cat
We'd have no room to swing it.
The Bridge Fours cluster at one end,
When they have had their teas ;
And up and down the restless wend,
Exhausting calories.

Sometimes to other Blocks we stray,
A rumour to discuss it :
Or just to pass the time of day,
Or talk of food—and cuss it !
Perhaps some libellous tale enjoy ;
But when it's time to roam,
That well-known cliché we employ
And talk of " going home."

We don't go in for luxuries ;
We have no chairs to sit on ;
Few tables, so upon my knees
This doggerel is written.
The dreary days drag slowly by—
How many lie ahead ?
And when the lights go out we sigh,
Relieved to get to bed.

— o —

SECOND HELPING ROSTER.

On Monday 'twas Stinking Fish and Curry ;
On Tuesday stuff I'd not touch at a price !
On Wednesday we'd Beans—and you know what that means—
On Thursday Savoury Rice.
On Friday there was no need to worry ;
On Saturday my turn was nearly due—
But on Sunday I deserved it but the unfair way they served it—
I didn't get my " seconds " of Meat Stew !

— o —

KUNGI.

I've eaten my Kungi with masses
Of coconut, grated and squeezed :
At one time, when one got molasses,
The unspeakable stuff almost pleased.
I've had it with Cocoa and Nestles—
In my opulent days I'd explain—
But now one regrettably wrestles
To put down the ruddy stuff plain.

With that stuff, Gula Batu,* I've tried it ;
(Once I had skimmed off the scum !)
Into cakes, into biscuits I've fried it,
But I found the result pretty bum.
With lashings of Gula Malacca†
To improve it was almost in vain :
So Black Monday is now even blacker
As I swallow the ruddy stuff plain.

It's foul : but I have a notion
That the cooks are not really at fault,
As with gallons of the China Ocean‡
They swamp it, to introduce salt.
It's not good, but it's better with sugar ;
But with Palm Oil it gives me a pain—
As in Yorkshire they say, " It's a ————— "
To stomach the ruddy stuff plain.

— o —

APOLOGIA.

You may notice in some of these jingles
My mind seems to run on one thing :
Though, occasionally something else mingles,
Food is the main topic I sing.
To food and the stuff that they'd stack away,
Charles Dickens would give a front place ;
And you'll find William Makepeace Thackeray
Quite lyrical on Bouillabaisse.

But the Changi menu is dull, Sirs !
No hope of improvement I see.
Though you may get a change if you've ulcers
Or smoke shag until you can't see.
Then, Marmite (with doctors prescribing it)
But otherwise, just Rice and Greens—
Food seems a loose way of describing it,
But I daresay you know what one means.

* *A coarse kind of sugar, used, I believe, in cake making, etc.*
† *A kind of sugar or molasses obtained from various palms.*
‡ *Owing to shortage of salt, sea water was used in the kitchen.*

KEEP IT DRY!

Upon the witching hour of ten,
I wait upon the doctor, when
He dabs on Iodine and then
Says: "Keep it dry!"

In the Dispensary we meet:
Daily the doctor has to treat
And bandage my "Syonan" feet
(And mutter: "Keep it dry!")

Sometimes he scrapes a fungoid growth,
To which performance I'm much loath,
And, as I mouth a strangled oath,
He murmurs: "Keep it dry!"

What would occur if it got wet
So far I have not fathomed yet,
For all the advice I ever get
Consists of: "Keep it dry."

So if I *do* get out of here,
My occupation, it is clear,
For some time will be quaffing beer—
I'll say I'll "Keep it dry!"

I think to Norwich I'll repair.
It sounds like Heaven: this is where
There are four hundred pubs; and there,
You watch me "Keep it dry!"

I long to meet the doctor who
In Changi told me what to do:
I'll whisper: "Mine's Pink Gin—but you!
You damwell 'Keep it dry'!"

— o —

THE KINGFISHER.

O Kingfisher, so fair and free,
Flying fast—a flash of blue:
The internee just wishes he
Might fly away the same as you.

O Kingfisher, you may know best—
But we think you're a nil wit:
With freedom blest why build your nest,
In Changi, in a Swill-Pit?

— o —

SMOKE CLOUDS.

Lord Byron sang of Naked Beauties—
But he referred to his cigar—
And brutal man more of a brute is
When from tobacco they debar.
Life without smoke is pretty beastly ;
Virginian's best, says Thackeray ;
And you will find that J. B. Priestley
On 'baccy has a lot to say.

You too may read what Rudyard Kipling,
Himself a knowledgeable bloke,
Propounded when but a mere stripling,
" Woman's but Woman—a Cigar's a Smoke."
These are the views that they all carry ;
To smoke's a joy, is what they mean ;
Let me just add—Sir J. M. Barrie
Favoured his " Lady Nicotine."

The pick of every season's croppings
We used to smoke : but were we sure ?
Was some exotic Camel-droppings—
The rest just homely Horse Manure ?
But since in Changi we're a fixture,
And decent baccy is denied,
Each man collects his " Changi Mixture "—
Cigar butts, God knows what beside.

And if you were the lucky owner
Of a Cigar of massive size,
A Churchillian Coron' Corona,
Rolled on some naked houri's thighs !
Suppose—but it's no time for joking ;
Life is too grim and my heart grieves
When I see all and sundry smoking
Dried tea mixed with Papaya leaves.

— o —

PLAT DU JOUR.

A cut off the joint with a couple of veg.
In the old days would take off the appetite's edge :
To-day it would too, could we get it, but it's
A spoonful of Protein with a couple of Vits.

— o —

NEWSPAPERS.

With an issue of newspapers, you will find the Gaol stampeding,
For all are anxious to pick out the light and pleasant reading.
My luck seems out, for all I get is lists of stocks and shares—
I get no kick in reading of two-year-old Bulls and Bears.

You may read about the scandals and some really fruity crimes,
Which horrified the readers of the *San Francisco Times* :
How J. J. Whistlebummer shot his mistress through the gizzard,
Just because she fell a victim to the wiles of a lounge lizard.

Some pictures of the film stars, and a Hollywood review ;
And Zadkiel's prophecies, perhaps, for nineteen forty-two.
Some hints on Bridge from Ely C. or even Josephine—
But when it's been read through and through, it goes to the Latrine !

Yes, in convenient sizes, one takes it to " The Wall,"
Where it is relegated to the basest use of all.
And then I'm glad, no longer sad, with share lists to employ,
For I should hate to desecrate the face of Myrna Loy !

— o —

PRETTY SNOBBY.

The sign-writer to his Art is wedded ;
He caters for the many-headed ;
Though there are also moments when,
He panders to the Upper Ten.

For this room, so it seems to me,
Is peopled by the Bourgeoisie :
The other is so varied that
I class them, Proletariat.

For over here, I beg to state,
We don't " spit "—we " expectorate."
While over there, I grieve to say,
They " spit " ; and so are common clay.

— o —

RUTHLESS RHYME.

Solely due to watery gruel
Two men swooned while carting fuel.
The Fatigue Boss said : " Well, they're no use :
Tip 'em in the ' Dry Refuse.'
Some of you must come back later
And cart them to the Incinerator."

— o —

I'm tired of Rubber planting ; when I get out of here,
I'd like to earn my livelihood in a very different sphere.
The job must be a simple one—not one of those to irk—
Ensuring a large income, with very little work.

A Specialist in Harley Street, for that is where the tin is ;
I'd say to all my patients : " Cough ! I thank you—just three guineas ! "
Or be a famous oculist and fix chaps with up with goggles—
Though at the thought of great fat fees, the imagination boggles !

To write a " World's Best Seller " ! At that I would rejoice ;
Or be the author, monthly, of the Book Society's Choice.
Perhaps create a character like Jeeves or Sancho Panza,
And scoop up royalties in a sack—why, that would be bonanza !

I'd like to go upon the stage, but I doubt if I've the nerve to,
And play a daring hero, with elan, dash and verve too :
I'm sure that I'd become tongue-tied and just a mass of dithers,
Had I to clasp in fond embrace some girl like Googie Withers.

But this is all fantastic and for such I am not fitted :
My school reports, though tactful, gave hints I was half-witted.
And, after years of Changi, perhaps the only job that I'd know
Would be a Living Skeleton, at Blackpool, in a Side-show !

— o —

IN THE SOUP.

A walker, jay,
Slapdash and hearty,
Failed to make way
For a Ration Party.

He fell headlong
And, with a groan,
Sank in the tong
Of " Minestrone."

The Ration Par-
Ty said : " Blast you ! "
And shoved him far-
Ther in the stew.

Upon our Floor,
All feel replete :
For ne'er before
Was so much meat.

— o —

THE LIBRARY.

" Thank goodness for the Library " is what we all should say :
And speaking personally I go there every day.
But so does everybody else, and I wait in the crowd
And admire the incinerator which was built by Heenan, Froude.
And when, at last, I do get in, I browse and browse about
Till some officious personage comes up and turfs me out.

My reading is omnivorous and pretty varied is my choice ;
I fall, with Dornford Yates, 'mid thieves, or go over all Rolls Royce.
I know the Priestley " Minors "—like Miss Thong and Mr Joby ;
And many pleasant hours I've spent with Tristram's Uncle Toby ;
I've wallowed in some sloppy stuff by Gene Stratton-Porter—
But so far I have not succumbed to " Shepherd Easton's Daughter."

I re-read Thackeray, though bored by the sanctimonious Colonel ;
But in Rawdon and Rebecca I find a joy eternal.
There's Conrad and there's Galsworthy, and, of course, the Pickwick Papers,
Or something dam' ridiculous like Thorne Smith's Topper's capers.
Then the murders of the innocents, and guess whom they've been killed by ;
And I'm rubbing up my Wallace, whom everyone is thrilled by.

I'm well up in my Wodehouse and all his books I've read :
I revel in the Springtime with Pongo's Uncle Fred :
I laugh at S. F. Ukridge and his money-making plans ;
You'll find me first and foremost 'mong the Oldest Member's fans.
I admire the Machiavellian Jeeves and how he does the dirty,
And gives away the purple shirts of that poor fathead, Bertie.

I hope I shan't be here so long that I'll read all the books,
In fact I do not want to, as I loathe these Yankee crooks.
I'm afraid the Dulwich War Record my attention does not hold ;
And, though it is " the only way," Conserv'tism leaves me cold.
Although I'll miss some good 'uns, I needn't give two hoots,
For when I do get out of here, I can get them all from " Boots."

— o —

BEER !

Some serious drinking I must do
When I get out of here,
And prove what Belloc wrote is true
Of the Washington Inn beer.

All over Sussex I shall roam.
In Henfield I'll be seen :
In Cowfold I'll blow off the foam—
Then, back to Partridge Green.

In Brighton I should like to stay ;
The Bedford Shades I'd try ;
Royal Sovereign's across the way ;
Not far, The Gate Hangs High.*

The White Hart stands in Lewes town ;
The Maiden's Head at Uckfield :
The Peacock out towards Piltdown :
The King's Arms lies in Cuckfield.

Then back to Lewes : here of course,
More pubs than one can tell is :—
The Pelham Arms, the Lamb, Black Horse,
The Vine, now known as " Shelleys."

In Worthing I'd do worse than stick,
My Tamplin's Ale to neck it :
The Ship, Warne's Frog Pond, The Half Brick,
The Elms : Thomas à Becket.

I'll mention, when they want to close,
In Sussex burr, " Well, dang 'ee !
I'm only making up for those
I missed each day in Changi ! "

— o —

ST. ANDREWS.

St. Andrew's Nicht hae come and ganged :
Anither yin here, that is.
Na Bubblyjock, na saxpence banged,
Na Haggis and na Tatties.
Na Mountain Dew : so a' forlorn,
Success we canna rank it—
Och well : na sair heids i' the morn,
For that let a' be thankit !

— o —

APRES LA GUERRE.

So far as I can see
There's no beverage here but tea :
You may write me down an ass,
But I prefer a Bass.

**Or used to !*

We smoke the filthiest fags
And shaggist of shags ;
No use to cry, " For these,
O give me Players Please ! "

When free it will feel strange :
My mode of life will change.
Waste no more time in queues ;
I shall wear shirts and shoes.

And shouldn't I look silly,
Matchless, in Piccadilly,
To grab hold and upset a
Bloke's Romeo y Julietta ?

I might, in some snack bar,
Say, " No thanks ! No Caviare.
It isn't to my taste—
Bring me some Changi Paste ! "

Or, hungry as a hunter,
Pop in for tea with Gunter—
And then create a scene
If there's no Kremoline.

No ! At the Berkeley Grill,
A dozen oysters will
Precede a bird ; then, Joy !
A bottle of " The Boy."

Rum omelettes : Stilton Cheese,
Seem made to follow these.
Some brandy ; and a snort
Of Cockburn 'o6 Port.

— o —

A Bright Young Thing—Red Lips, by Tangee—
Refused an Internee from Changi.
She said : " Thanks all the same
But I can't take your name :
I'd find it just too too chain gangy."

— o —

DESIGN FOR LIVING.

The Art of the Tattooist
In here has prominence :
Designs are of the newest
And some of them immense.
From John o' Groats to Truro
Such colours ne'er were seen ;
In truth a chiaroscuro
Of Red and Blue and Green.

There's one which may surprise you,
A pair of Air Force wings.
There's moths and butterflies too
And tigers, birds and things.
On some you'll find there are prints
Of foxes on their backs,
And close upon the varmints
There come, of course, the packs.

Some torsos are quite covered
From navel up to gorge ;
On one I have discovered
Queen Mary and King George.
Another one will poultice,
(For reasons of his own)
A short obituary notice,
Complete with a tombstone.

There's one you'll find admixes
A snake with fighting cocks ;
Some favour Crucifixes :
Some bears and Goldilocks.
Their choices are elastic—
But one I will not pass ;
It's really too fantastic
To wear eyes upon your —— !

— o —

My Darling, how I loved the curl
That on your shoulder lingered.
The only queue I ever knew ;
How often have I fingered ?
My Darling, nowadays this churl
Finds life a somewhat vexed thing—
I think of you each time I queue
For this, that and the next thing !

— o —

SLIM STUFF.

Time was I turned the scale at fourteen stone,
But only once—and that was in Australia.
No exercise on shipboard was, I own
One cause ; and good food, inter alia.
Rude folk, my swollen girth detecting,
Were wont to ask me if I were expecting.

Those days are gone— but still I'm of good heart.
Necessity has changed me to a slim eater ;
My Sisyphean struggles at the firewood cart
Have told their tale upon my perimeter.
Laugh and grow fat ! Here's little mirth—
A fact that is reflected in my girth.

Am I improved, now I'm a smaller size ?
That is the present point that is at issue.
Shall I or not find favour in *Her* eyes,
Now I have shed so much superfluous tissue ?
It's true, and I'm not talking through my hat,
When I say I've lost Pounds of Ugly Fat.

— o —

MY MUSE.

I may seem odd but I find queues
Are stimulating to my Muse.
And many a stave I have turned out
While hanging here and there about.
The place and time may vary too—
Most fruitful is the Library queue.

Why should this spot, like a tube station,
Whet my jaded imagination ?
Sometimes I only stand—then, Stink
Of Fish must make me stand *and* think :
And, doggedly, like Mr. Trollope,
Set to and churn out quite a dollop.

A phrase may strike me as I stand,
And then I take my pen in hand.
I search my pocket and I raise
A scrap of newsrag or of Jeyes.
My theme pursue however mean it is,
Eschewing all grosser obscenities.

— o —

THE LINGUISTS.

Of classes there are legion,
Where you can learn to speak,
French, German, Dutch, Norwegian,
Welsh and colloquial Greek.

But in this modern Babel,
I shouldn't care to bet
That half of them are able
To speak King's English yet.

They may be polyglottal :
Read Hebrew, Portuguese,
Pushto, Chinese, but what'll
Be the use of these ?

These benefits will vanish
Now black-outs are decreed :
What is the use of Spanish,
If you can't see to read ?

Not even Esperanto
In these times will avail ;
In the darkness I began to
Wish I had studied Braille !

— o —

BARS.

If I glance up from my book,
Doesn't matter where I look,
Everywhere the same outlook—
Bars !

Sorrowful I find my plight ;
In the corridors at night,
Reflected in the moonlight bright—
Bars !

Bars are here and bars are there !
Blinkin' bars are everywhere !
Bringing cruel and carking care—
Bars !

In the future when I'm free,
A different kind will gladden me ;
Those the bars I long to see—
Bars !

Neon lights don't spell Chagrin ;
They spell Whisky, Beer and Gin—
Bright lights welcoming me in—
Bars !

— o —

HIGGLEDY-PIGGLEDY.

Communal life don't suit my style ;
I find it most galling.
Every other man is vile—
All the rest, appalling !
When at last the night time comes,
It seems nearer Heaven ;
Almost like a home from home,
In my " Three by Seven."

So much is each man allowed—
One and twenty square feet.
Where I live is quite a crowd ;
Eight score others share it.
A Coolie's room was ten by ten ;
Tighter you mayn't jam it ;
Subtract one from t'other, then,
See the difference, dammit !

Though the future we can't see,
Through the mists enshrouding ;
Not so chary shall we be
About over-crowding.
If remarks the A.C.L.*
On the subject ventures,
I shall simply give him hell
Through my gnashing dentures !

*A.C.L.— *Assistant Controller of Labour.*

— o —

DETECTIVE FICTION.

My days in here have been less hard
Thanks to the fictional detective ;
Not Tobias Gregson or Lestrade,
For they were mentally defective.
But Sherlock Holmes and Peter Wimsey
Who " get their men " from " data " flimsy.

What Sherlock was in his hey-day,
Words simply fail me to express it ;
And, truthfully, think I can say
That none was *proxime accessit.*
He knew what difference lay between a
Wild Woodbine's ash or Golafina.

And then, of course, there's Belgium's pride,
To Hercule Poirot I'm referring.
" There's always something people hide,"
He'd say to witnesses demurring.
He encountered crime in many clashes ;
Hobbies :—Grey Cells and Waxed Moustaches.

Lord Peter Wimsey, I'd explain,
Was billeted in Piccadilly ;
His valet, Bunter : *m.* H. Vane,
Herself a knowledgeable filly.
And when he'd put right faults constabular,
He'd go collecting incunabula.

That ultra-scientific cop,
A certain Thorndyke, strikes the eye.
He'd always catch you on the hop
With knowledge of minutiae.
Out-Sherlock Sherlock ; and he'd just
Reconstruct crimes from specks of dust.

For an hour, maybe, my thirst I'll quench
With a case which the Yard may send on
Inspector Wilson : Joseph French :
Young Waghorn (educated Hendon) ;
Or Chief Inspector Alleyn, Roderick—
Of these I think he is the pick.

I thank you ! Arthur Conan-Doyle,
G. and M. Cole, Wills Croft, D. Sayers ;
There's not a criminal who'll foil
A. Freeman, John Rhode, if they're players.
May Ngaio Marsh write us more mysteries,
And Agatha produce more Christieses !

— o —

HAPPY DAYS WILL COME AGAIN.

Distant are the days, alas,
When I'd but to lift a
Beaded, brimming stengah glass
And revel in a snifter.

Gone are the times when I'd enjoy
A Gin and Angostura ;
Vain indeed to call the Boy—
I blame it on the Fuehrer !

Sometimes chappies whisper here,
" How'd a stengah go, Sir ? "
" What about a glass of Beer ? "
But I answer, " No, Sir ! "

Their suggestion brings no glee ;
But I will not cozen—
One would be no use to me ;
I want half a dozen !

Though perhaps I can't afford
Fishin', Huntin', Shootin' ;
I'll find I am never bored
Hootin', Tootin', Snootin.'

Happy days will come again !
My tankard, I'll unshelve it ;
And with Guinness and Champagne
I'll be on Black Velvet !

— o —

LE ROI S'AMUSE.

I like to see D.O.s
Washing clothes :
I like to see V.A.s
Planting maize.
I like to see my Broker,
Boiler stoker ;
The dispenser of a pill
Carting Swill.
I like to see a Judge
Handling " Sludge."
And First-Class Magistrates
Washing plates.
The makers of our laws
Scrubbing floors ;
The Protector of Chinese
Splitting trees.
The " Bloke-who-thinks-he's-Brains "
Cleaning drains :
And Departmental Heads
De-bugging beds.

D.O.—*District Officer.* V.A.— *Visiting Agent.*

You may ask why these should
Make me feel good ?
It must be, I presume a
Warped Sense of Humour.
It's not such fun when I
Must do it too ;
Though watching—God knows why—
Amuses you !

— o —

CARBUNCULAR.

I had a swelling on my—well !
A place I hardly like to tell :
I will but hint—so don't you frown—
I couldn't comfortably sit down.
The doctor said : " Without a doubt—
Boils, one, left buttock. Cut it out ! "
And so they hacked away like fun
And soon the bloody deed was done.

Those people, rather more refined,
Were wont to ask : " How's your behind ? "
And those, who scarcely were inferior,
Used to enquire : " How's your posterior ? "
The common herd—you'd easily spot 'em—
They simply asked : " Well, how's your bottom ? "
But lower down the scale were some
Who greeted me with : " How's your bum ? "
Among the odds and sods I class
The creatures who cried : " How's your arse ? "

I thank you one and all ! I am
Much easier now—and so's my ham.
The operation left me weak
And (a lovely dimple on my " cheek ").
I'm afraid I cannot show it you
But when I'm bathing it's on view ;
A cross, at present red and fresh,
Marks where I lost my pound of flesh !

— o —

BEARDS.

I met a bloke the other day
Who stopped and buttonholed me ;
And such a lot he had to say
And such a lot he told me ;
I wondered—though it sounds untrue—
Who *was* it I was talking to ?

The fellow had a big black beard,
Something like Dr. Grace's.
Such people ought to have them cleared
So you can see their faces ;
Then you could clearly get a view
And see who you were talking to.

He had squint eyes and rabbit teeth,
A scar upon his forehead.
And then it struck me ; underneath
His beard his face was horrid.
I thought a bit, and then I knew
Who it was I was speaking to.

It's satisfactory to disguise
The more unpleasant features :
Although it's hard to recognise
The meanest of God's creatures.
For this one was a fellow who
I'd not be seen dead talking to !

— o —

CHRISTMAS PRESENTS.

I have a lady friend
Upon the female side ;
And last year, she did send
A present—smokes supplied.

I feel somehow I ought
The compliment return :
There's nothing can be bought :
There's nothing I can earn.

My " uncle " has my gold :
My sarongs* I must use :
My watches I have sold
In Aldgate to the Jews.

I have a dressing gown
In yellow morocain :
I often get it down—
And put it back again !

I know 'twould look a gem on
My Phyllis, if she'd wear it :
But, like Barkisesis Lemon.
I feel I cannot spare it.

* *You know—as worn by Dorothy Lamour, but without the glamour !*

'Twould make her heart rejoice
If I sent the lovely thing :
I salve that " still small voice "
By saying I've no string.

So that is that : and though
You think my action rotten—
If she reads this she'll know
She wasn't quite forgotten !

— o —

CRICKET.

Let me now of Cricket sing,
In these doleful days ;
Though it seems a wicked thing
To bestow no praise.
I've decried it in these lays,
Its glamour quite ignoring,
Harped on noise spectators raise,
And the fellow scoring !

Cricket in here is the kind
That requires its own rules :
Similar to that you'll find
Played at many prep. schools.
Nothing British ardour cools ;
Cricket draws the madmen
Barracking unflannelled fools,
And embryo Bradmen.

There're no actual runs at all :
Give a hearty clout ;
Four each time you hit the wall :
Over it is " Out."
Get your eye in : lay about ;
Nothing seems to shift 'ee ;
Like the M.C.S. no doubt,
You'll retire at fifty.

Small things please a little mind :
And there are far, far
Better things that they might find
To do which wouldn't jar.
As I don't know what they are,
Return I to my muttons,
Make out what good chaps they are,
Budding Hearnes and Huttons.

BED-TIME STORY.

At ten o'clock the lights go out :
At ten o'clock they start to spout !
All the things no doubt that they
Might have mentioned through the day.
In fifteen hours you'd think they'd tell
Everything—but do they hell !
Why the devil can't they keep
A little quiet and let me sleep ?
Anything I overhear
Makes the situation clear
That the makers of this din
Should be in the Looney Bin.
It's enough to make one tearful
Listening in to such an earful !
And so, at ten, I think they might
Refrain from making foul the night.
Should they be quiet in the room,
One cannot even then assume
It will be still ; for in the yard,
A lot of twerps are chatting hard.
Just as I begin to doze,
Some conscientious copper goes
And tells the Camp it's half-past-ten
And dam-well wakes me up again.
Fed up to the back teeth I'm—
Isn't it a bleedin' shime ?

— o —

THE COCKROACH.

Word has come from the H.O.*
That the time's approaching
And a-hunting we must go—
Tally-ho ! Cockroaching !

Little insects such as these
Leave such horrid messes :
Also they may bring disease—
This the doctor stresses.

The doctor's Representative
Feels the danger encroach :
Offers idea tentative,
" Kill off every henroach ! "

The cockroach isn't hard to please ;
But you'd think that he'd know
The taste between an old chemise
And my best tuxedo.

**Health Officer.*

Not a bit ! He is, you'll find
An omnivorous eater ;
When he's finished leaves behind
Plenty of excreta.

In my suit case they abound.
I've been free from Bugs,
Since they've moved in there, I've found—
You've been had for mugs !

Who cares for a spot of dung !
Fussy blokes defeat me.
Let a paean now be sung
I've no bugs to eat me.

— o —

BACKS TO THE "WALL"

You may all have read my views—
What I think of all these queues.
But I find there's lack of beauty
Dallying to do my "duty."

And I linger in the rain
While the Costive sit and strain.
That is why I have the notion
Many go in for slow motion.

— o —

You can talk of gin and beer
Now you're shut up safe in here :
But of talk of food and drink I've had enough.
You can long for Marrons Glacés,
(Though such things as these are passé)
Or for chocolates full of gooey-slithery stuff.

Now, in Changi prison pent,
It's no use to resent
That we don't feed as Epicurus or Lucullus :
The Committee does its best
And publishes with zest
Long menus, in the hope that it may gull us.

By this time you must know
We get mainly rice ; and though
Occasion'lly we get meat—it's not the best.
The authorities may vet it ;
But I think we only get it
On the night the old cow dies of Rinderpest.

Like a lot of hungry whelps
We queue up for " second helps "—
Though O. Twist it is no good to go an aping.
When all is given out
You see one or two about
The empty tongs, all diligently scraping.

Many people it distresses
To see the M.C.S.'s
Senior members wrangling over skinny onions
Each man holds his own views,
But Shakespearean words I'll use
And cry to them : "Aroint ye, rump-fed ronyons ! "

When at last we get release
And it's piping times of peace
I shall make up for lost time in binge and beanos ;
I shall don the " soup and fish "
And I'll sample every dish
On the menu at Boulestin's or Quaglino's.

— o —

A HANDFUL OF PRUNES.

We got some American Comforts ;
The first for a number of moons.
Of Pastes there were several rum sorts,
And just a small handful of prunes.

All extras we nearly despair of,
We poor dissatisfied loons :
And among my particular share of
The parcel, were just a few prunes.

One parcel was shared among seven ;
I laud it in praisegiving tunes—
I can't help it ; there's no rhyme but heaven—
Although I'm singing of prunes !

Such gifts we appreciate fully,
And well they're regarded as boons :
Tinned salmon, cheese, coffee and bully—
And just a small handful of prunes.

Some sugar, some Vitamin tablets,
Inscribed with curious runes,
Some emergency ration in slablets,
And just a small handful of prunes.

But some of these very fine gifts we,
I regret, sold for many doubloons :
For fags fetched five dollars for fifty—
There wasn't much market for prunes !

In peace-time I'm often abusing ;
I ridicule them in lampoons :
But now you don't find me refusing
To lap up my handful of prunes !

— o —

In early days our night was rent
By snores and snorts and sneezes ;
And nightmare shrieks were also blent
With coughs and groans and wheezes ;
And other sounds, in great variety,
Which are not heard in good society.

Now several months soon wrought a change :
No hum now, like a spin-top.
The silence is so very strange—
Why, you could hear a pin drop !
To find out why—I make confession—
I asked the Medical Profession.

The profession hummed and hawed ; then said,
" In peace you have got lots on
Your stomach when you go to bed :
So simple, my dear Watson !
Surfeit of food might bring on Colic ;
The rest—Excesses, alcoholic ! "

And so, that's why we all outgrew
Our, p'raps, intemperate habits.
Scarce meat, and booze we never knew ;
We live on greens like rabbits.
Don't worry—we'll begin to snore
When we live as we lived before !

— o —

Life has a new outlook for me ;
Of permanent gardeners I'm one.
The advantages, namely, are three—
A Book and a Bath and a Bun.

It will be quite patent to you ;
At the Library, when *my* work is done,
I don't have to wait in the queue
For a Book (or a Bath or a Bun) .

The Bath-House is closed to the mob ;
New strictures on water been took ;
But any old time, in I bob
For a Bath (or a Bun or a Book).

My calorie output is such
I might get as thin as a lath ;
I get—though I don't like it much—
A Bun (and a Book and a Bath).

My heart thrills with joy when it rains ;
I get a day off and it's fun ;
At the same time I get, for my pains,
A Book and a Bath and a Bun.

How long it will last I can't guess,
For I have just only begun ;
And each day I shall do less and less
For my Book and my Bath and my Bun !

— o —

THE LAST STRAW.

I do not set up as an epicure :
I like good food and all that it imputes.
Conservative my taste, I shun the newer,
Preferring well-tried menus' constitutes.
Haggis I've swallowed (aided by small toots)
But with such even, the digestion quails ;
There is a limit and I know what suits—
I draw the line at Rubber Seeds and Snails !

Internees live on Rice. It may be pure :
That it is good for them no one disputes.
And so I eat it : with it I endure
Unwholesome looking greens and bamboo shoots ;
Unripe papaya ; Tapioca roots :
Pig-food like Sweet Potato tops wholesale.
But though I feel just like the lower brutes,
I draw the line at Rubber Seeds and Snails.

Exotic items replace " Confiture "—
Red Palm Oil : " Pea-nut Spread " ; insipid fruits ;
Dried fish, first cousin to Grade A manure,
Stinks to high heaven and the air pollutes.
Soon I'll be through with all these substitutes
And may forget some of the grim details ;
And though I've smoked papaya leaf as cheroots,
I draw the line at Rubber Seeds and Snails.

Though many dishes taste but of old boots,
There is a limit when my courage fails ;
I may be starving—I don't give two hoots ;
I draw the line at Rubber Seeds and Snails !

— o —

Come to my garden of Kangkong ;
Here Spinach blows ;
Sweet Basil, but there's no bank on
Which Wild Thyme grows.
Breezes steal over the Compost—
And up the nose—
Wet Refuse is hereon tossed
To decompose.

— o —

BOREHOLE PHILOSOPHY.

We have in this prison all classes ;
Though all men are brothers, a few
Don't like to be ranked with the masses—
I expect we all know one or two.

Life is not all roses and kisses ;
Few luxuries in here we have ;
One's own private bath room one misses—
To say nothing of one's private lav. !

How do I know who's what what in ?
There's nothing to show it at all—
They all look alike when they're squatting
In serried rows down at " The Wall."

On the subject I feel like enlarging
When I think of the big bugs I've seen,
De-bagged and denuded, discharging
Their duties down at the latrine.

When I am free I may go, Sir,
To some swagger house for a meal ;
And there see some bloke that I know, Sir,
Far better when *en dishabille.*

Or at some public function he's wearing
Decorations and Orders so trim :
I shall laugh at the times I've been sharing
A seat on the latrine with him !

One only can play but a poor role
In circumstance such : and I find
In a communal seat on a " bore-hole "
A true leveller of all mankind !

— o —

ELEGY ON THE BRIDGE LEAGUE.

The week-end marks the time of close of play :
The Bridge Fours clamber slowly to their floors :
The vanquished moan it's not their lucky day :
The Committee wrestles with the final scores.

The " Eagles " tell the " Sparrows " how they've done :
The " Maidens " treat the whole thing as a joke :
The " Griffins " boast the success they have won :
The " Robins " wrangle over a revoke.

Haply some bloody-minded swine may say,
" 'Tis waste of time : when we were young, were told
That with a good book we should pass the day "–
There is but one book and it is of Gold !

The boast of Culbertson, the Asking Bids,
And all the tricks his system might have made
Await alike among the " might have dids "
If only the opponents had not led a Spade.

When on some chuckleheaded partner one relies
And he for " jump " bids doesn't give a damn
But merely passes ; thus the bidding dies,
And you have gone to bed with a Grand Slam.

There at the foot of some Block's winding stair
That wreathes its weary way to outlook bleak ;
Some listless couples linger in despair
And hope that they'll have better luck next week.

The Changi Bridge League drags its weary way,
And soon we'll know which team has won the prize :
Which earned promotion : sad indeed the day
When hope of missing relegation dies.

— o —

" Hoots ! " cried Sandy, " in Changi whiles
For naething Doc cut oot ma piles ;
And dealt wi' ma strangulated hernia—
And anither sma' matter that doesna' concern yer."

— o —

ENVOI.

I've come to the end of my journey.
Though I hardly hoped that I would
Write quite so much tripe as an Internee—
I hope you'll think one or two good !

The subject matter perhaps is
Pedestrian, sordid and mean :
But, apart from one or two lapses,
I've kept on the whole pretty clean.

I trust that I've brought no one sorrow—
It amused me when I'd nought to do :
But I'd not be surprised if to-morrow
I started upon Volume Two !

THE END.

CHANGI INTERLUDE